University of Alberta

Criminal Tales as Cultural Trade: the Production, Reception, and Preservation of Canadian Pulp Magazines

by

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Abstract

In *Criminal Tales as Cultural Trade: the Production, Reception, and Preservation of Canadian Pulp Magazines*, I re-construct the history of Canadian pulp magazines. I argue that these texts were, and still are, in a process of constant negotiation with the political, economic, and social conditions in which they circulate. As the literature of the working poor, pulps were dismissed as mass-market trash throughout the 1940s. That said, the magazines proclaimed themselves as sites for the establishment of a national literature. As such, the pulps employ a rhetoric of national identity that resists the cultural devaluation applied to them. The tensions surrounding the significance of pulp persist in the archival politics that inform their preservation at the National Library of Canada. As a whole, my work contributes to the established field of Canadian literature as well as the emerging fields of print culture studies, pulp magazine history, and working-class literary studies.

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Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Chapter One: The Tangled Woof of Fact: The History and Cultural Politics of Canadian Pulp Magazine Production, 1940-49 9

Chapter Two: The Offal of the Magazine Trade: the Reception and Readership of Canadian Pulp Fiction 49

Chapter Three: Considering the Collection: How the Ephemeral Pulps Attained Archival Immortality 84

Conclusion 116

Endnotes 119

Bibliography 123

List of Figures

Figure 1: *Startling Crime Cases* 4.21 (May 1948): cover 24

Figure 2: *Daring Detective* (May 1941): cover 25

Figure 3: *Daring Crime Cases* 2.6 (August-September 1943): cover 34

Figure 4: *Startling Crime Cases* 2.15 (June 1946): cover 35

Figure 5: *Dare-Devil Detective Stories* (July 1941): cover 36

Figure 6: *Dare-Devil Detective Stories* 1.8 (January 1942): cover 37

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Introduction

In 1949, the House of Commons spent several days debating a ban on crime comics and crime pulps. The following is an argument in favour of the ban.

Mr. T.H. Goode: The other day I went into one of the stores in Ottawa to see just how bad the situation was here. In the store, forty-six different kinds of this trash were offered for sale. This is the offal of the magazine trade. No one should have to buy it. No one should be able to buy it. These are not the so-called "crime does not pay" magazines; I find they include *Crime and Punishment* and *Crime of Women*. In this are depicted women of ill repute standing in rather suggestive attitudes. This is a fine model for our young people to look at it! There are *Women Outlaws* and *True Mystery*. This latter is the most filthy book that I have ever seen on a magazine stand.

An Hon. Member: What is in it?

Mr. Goode: The honourable member can read it after I am through with it.

Reconstructing the history and cultural politics of Canadian pulp magazine production is like entering one of the chase-and-race mystery narratives popularized by the magazines themselves. Positioned as the seedy underside of literary production, Canadian pulp magazines circulated on the edge of both the law and cultural legitimacy for a decade. Remarkably prolific during this time, they were politically and economically slaughtered, dismembered, and buried in the 1950s. In 1996, however, the National Library of Canada acquired the only surviving remnant of these magazines. This archive consists of four-hundred and fifty different magazine issues, over one-hundred pieces of original cover art paintings, and five boxes of miscellaneous production materials. Initially collected by their publisher Alec Valentine, and later preserved by book collector George Flie, this archive is the foundation of my project. That said, a full understanding of pulp publishing reaches far beyond the archive itself. My research has entailed tracking down and interrogating George Flie, plaguing the National Library's pulp archivist with questions, scrolling through reams of microfilm in a darkened lab, and sifting through federal statutes and political debates. These remnants of a publishing phenomenon that once dominated the Canadian literary landscape lead not so much to the resolution of a mystery possessing what fictional detective Philip Marlowe called the "austere simplicity of fiction," but rather into a complex narrative made up of "the tangled woof of fact" (Chandler 169). Fragmented and at times inconclusive, the facts in this case nonetheless reveal the economics and politics that informed Canadian pulp publishing while simultaneously providing insight into the interaction between textual production and the social world.

Previous critical work on pulp magazines is almost non-existent and this absence was, in fact, the initial impetus for this project. In 1999, I was assigned an oral presentation for an undergraduate class on modernist literature; I was to talk about pulp magazines and the hard-boiled detective genre for fifteen minutes. I had never heard of pulp magazines and, in attempting to research my topic, I discovered that the sources from which I could learn were scant. Most of the previous work focused on the hard-boiled detective genre in a way that might appeal to the genre's fans. For example, William F. Nolan's *The Black Mask Boys* supplied biographical information and a sampling of stories from the better-known pulp writers like Dashiell Hammett, Erle Stanley Gardner, Frederick Nebel, Paul Cain, and Raymond Chandler. Ron Goulart's *The Hardboiled Dicks: An Anthology and Study of Pulp Detective Fiction* and Joseph Shaw's *The Hard-Boiled Omnibus* took similar approaches to the subject. Information on the pulp magazines themselves was even more difficult to find. Lee Server's book *Danger is my Business: An Illustrated History of the Fabulous Pulp Magazines* focused on the cover art and illustrations of all genres of pulp magazines, while Bill Blackbeard's reference article "Pulps and Dime Novels" condensed over one hundred years of popular publishing in the United States into thirty-three pages.

From this handful of information, I found that pulp magazines dominated the literary trade in North America for the first half the twentieth century. It is and is not surprising that such a phenomenon has been ignored by critical literary investigation. On one hand, the pulps were a mass-market publishing event in which millions of readers engaged for over fifty years. To overlook such a prominent cultural event is not only difficult, it is also intellectually negligent. On the other hand, the pulps were a mass-

market publishing event in which millions of readers engaged for over fifty years. The study of popular literature has occupied a marginal position in literary studies throughout the twentieth century. As Gary Hoppenstand, the editor of *The Journal of Popular Culture* observes, the words "popular culture" have traditionally been a "pejorative expression" in academic circles (1). I was, and still am, intrigued by this contradiction inherent in the study of popular literature: how is it that the very prevalence of pulp magazines in North American society has undermined their significance? An understanding of this contradiction, which my thesis pursues through its discussion of Canadian pulps, examines the uneasy tensions surrounding cultural politics, literary production and reception, and the definition of academic legitimacy.

Since my initial research as an undergraduate, two important books on pulp magazines have been published. Erin Smith's *Hard-Boiled: Working-Class Readers and Pulp Magazines* examines the reception of the hard-boiled detective genre that emerged in American pulp magazines during the 1920s. After re-constructing the readership of the genre, which she argues was primarily made up of white, working-class men, Smith goes on to offer "readings of selected texts in light of [these] reader['s] concerns" (13). In this way, Smith approaches the pulps within their historical context in order to understand the reading of pulp fiction as a social process. Sean McCann's work, *Gumshoe America*, also takes up pulp magazines and crime fiction within its historical context, but he focuses on the relationship between popular reading the political rhetoric of 1930s "New Deal" liberalism. In particular, McCann argues "hard-boiled crime fiction was uniquely positioned to bring out the contradictions and ironies that dogged the period's reconstruction of liberalism" (36). Both of these works therefore situate pulp

magazines in relation to the economic and political forces that shaped their production and reception in order to understand the social significance of the fiction itself. Beyond these works on pulp magazines and hard-boiled crime fiction, most writing on mystery fiction "comes out of the formalist or structuralist tradition that attends to texts as sign systems without attending to the social and economic worlds in which they are written and read" (Smith 5). Notably, both Smith and McCann focus on American literary culture. This focus is, perhaps, inevitable: the remnants of Canadian pulp publishing had been all but obliterated until the National Library of Canada acquired the archive that is now titled the Pulp Magazine Collection.

To date, only one article has been published on Canadian pulps. Focusing on a selection of true crime stories, historian Tina Loo and criminologist Carolyn Strange argue that these stories presented readers with popular narratives of morality. In particular, the stories selected by Loo and Strange examine the popular representations of moral and legal authority that white, colonial culture exerted over native cultures through law enforcement and the judicial system. This thesis begins at a more foundational place than the work of Loo and Strange. It is my contention that a complex understanding of Canadian pulp magazines must begin with a discussion of their place in Canada's literary history. This thesis is the first, and so far the only work, to take up the Canadian pulps as a print-culture phenomenon and the political, economic, and social forces that informed the phenomenon. I have taken this approach with the belief that the information and arguments I present will serve as a foundation for further inquiry into the social, historical, and literary aspects of Canadian pulp magazines. With this in mind, I focus on the artifacts presented by the National Library's pulp collection. From there, I draw on

other historical and literary documents in order to understand the way in which pulp fiction was edited, written, read, and, fifty years after their disappearance from Canadian culture, recovered and archived.

My discussion of pulp magazines is grounded in the model for studying the history of books set out by Robert Darnton in "What is the History of Books?" This model, which Darnton calls the communication circuit, traces the relationships between readers, authors, publishers, book sellers, and libraries while taking into consideration the influence that economics, politics, and intellectual discourse have on the circulation of texts. This research methodology, he argues, "concerns each phase of this [communication] process and the process as a whole, [...] in all its relations with other systems, economic, social, political, and cultural in the surrounding environment. This is a large undertaking" (11). Darnton's thoughts open the 2001 anthology *The Book History Reader*. The anthology, in its compilation of foundational works on print culture and book history, speaks to the increasing academic legitimacy of print culture as a field of study. In recognition of this, the anthology's editors note that "book history has emerged as a field of study in relatively recent times. Although its ancestors can be traced through prior disciplines such as bibliography and social history, it achieves its relative distinctiveness from both its emphasis upon print culture and the role of the book as a material object within that culture" (1). This emphasis on understanding texts in their historical context, with a particular emphasis on their production, circulation, and reception, is the foundation of my project.

In order to set manageable parameters around the possibilities for research suggested by Darnton, I have chosen to focus on the impact that the cultural hierarchy has

had on the circulation of pulp magazines. While Darnton's communication circuit is a good starting point for discussing the Canadian pulp magazines, the principles of cultural production set out by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu provide a much more comprehensive methodology for addressing the problems of cultural hierarchies, economies of production, and political power struggles that defined pulp publishing in Canada. In "The Field of Cultural Production," Bourdieu argues that a complete understanding of any given work of art or literature can only be achieved by considering it within the broader social and economic context of its creation and circulation. According to Bourdieu, the task of scholars seeking to construct a social history of literature is:

> a form of *analysis situs* which establishes that each position—e.g. the one which corresponds to a genre such as the novel or, within this, to a sub-category such as the "society novel" [...] or the "popular" novel—is subjectively defined by the system of distinctive properties by which it can be situated relative to other positions. (30)

To put it another way, the social meaning and cultural value of a given work of literature is determined by its relationship to its contemporaneous works.

This value is, in turn, closely connected to the author's position within the field of cultural production as well as the work's circulation among class fractions with differing degrees of power. As he explains:

> the literary or artistic field is at all times the site of a struggle between the two principles of hierarchization: the heteronomous principle, favourable to those who dominate the field economically and politically (e.g. "bourgeios art") and the autonomous principle (e.g. art for art's sake), which those of its advocates who

> are least endowed with specific capital tend to identify with degree of independence from the economy, seeing temporal failure as a sign of election and success as a sign of compromise. (40)

In the autonomous field, the value of a work of literature is divorced from its commercial value. In fact, commercial value is viewed with distrust while recognition by one's fellow autonomous producers ascribe the work symbolic value. In the heteronomous field, cultural production is tied to profitability. The commercial success of a work makes it financially valuable, but such value detracts from its symbolic significance. These disparities in value constitute a cultural hierarchy in which works produced solely for profit and sold to a mass audience, such as pulp magazines, occupy the lowest position. With this in mind, I trace the political and economic conditions that instigated, and then ended, the circulation of pulp magazines in Canada in order to understand the logic behind their degraded position in the cultural hierarchy.

Chapter One

The Tangled Woof of Fact:

The History and Cultural Politics of

Canadian Pulp Magazine Production, 1940-49

Originality distinguished the true author from the hack. [...] The emphasis on originality and novelty, introducing as it did a new hierarchy of literary endeavor, underscored the special relationship that the author bore to his text. If a work was original it was also unique, the distinctive consequence of the writer's imagination.

--John Brewer, "Authors, Publishers, and Literary Culture"

Kelley had been walking along Wellington Street, past the offices of some pulp magazines, when an editor saw him going by and rushed into the street and said he needed a story immediately for one of his confession magazines. "Two hundred bucks if you can do it before noon," the editor said. "So I walked in," Kelley said, "and he sat me down at a typewriter and I said "What's the title?" and the editor said "Type this at the top: I WAS A LOVE SLAVE."" Ten pages later, and in time to meet me for lunch, he had done the story and collected his money.

--Scott Young on pulp writer Thomas P. Kelley

The first pulp magazine was created in the United States 1896, when magazine publisher Frank Munsey began using rough-hewn pulp paper to print his magazine *The Argosy*. This simple change prompted a publishing revolution in the American magazine industry, an event that could not have been foreseen by Munsey. According to Bill Blackbeard, the publisher inaugurated the new format "only as one more step to save a foundering magazine, not as a calculated move in opening a new publishing frontier" (Blackbeard 224). Munsey was twenty-thousand dollars in debt in 1896 and faced with closing the magazine that he had been struggling to make economically viable since 1882. Initially, his periodical had been titled *The Golden Argosy: Freighted with Treasures for Boys and Girls*. It was an illustrated weekly paper consisting of eight pages of fiction intended for ten-to-twenty-year-olds. The magazine never established a substantial circulation, so in 1886 Munsey dropped the "For Boys and Girls" subtitle and began publishing for adults in an effort to reach a wider audience. In 1888, he shortened the title itself to simply *Argosy*, but the magazine's sales continued to dwindle throughout the 1890s. The use of pulp paper changed everything.

Cheap, flimsy, and coarse, pulp pages reduced the magazine's production costs to the point at which Munsey could sell a 128-192 page issue of *Argosy* for only a dime. This price was significantly lower than the twenty-five cent cost of purchasing a slick-paper magazine. Additionally, the magazines differentiated themselves from slick magazines because pulp paper could not be used to print the colour images used in the advertisements that were becoming increasingly prevalent in slick magazines. As a result, Munsey's magazine was affordable to the working classes in the same instant that it removed itself from the growth of advertising that was shaping slick magazines. In

analysing the relationship between advertising and magazine circulation, Mark Morrisson notes that "advertising and commodity consumption became an organizing social and cultural principle, and not just a method of keeping the economic fires lit" (4). A reciprocal relationship between the content and aesthetic appeal of magazines to a particular class caused that class to adopt the magazine as a part of their culture. In this way, magazines vied for different positions within the cultural hierarchy. Literary or intellectually-oriented magazines such as *The Atlantic Monthly* or *Harper's* targeted the educationally and economically elite, slick-paper magazines like *Ladies' Home Journal* and *The Saturday Evening Post* became mainstays of middle-class culture, and pulp magazines took up a cultural value as the reading fodder of the working masses.

The physical nature of the *Argosy*, characterized by its cheap paper and two columns of densely packed type per page, contributed to its working-class popularity. With its devotion to text, the *Argosy* provided its readers with not only more pages of fiction per issue than its competitors, but also more fiction per page. This made the magazine an appealing purchase to a working-class audience. According to Pierre Bourdieu, working-class culture is permeated by a close proximity to necessity: it is largely informed by the demands of meeting basic needs for food, shelter, and clothing. As a result, functionality and value-for-money are key concerns in decisions regarding the purchase of cultural goods. As he explains:

> the submission to necessity which inclines working-class people to a pragmatic, functionalist "aesthetic," refusing the gratuity and futility of formal exercises and of every form or art for art's sake, is also the principle of all the choices of daily

> existence and of an art of living which rejects specifically aesthetic intentions as aberrations. (*Distinction* 376)

The *Argosy* met the needs of working-class readers by supplying a large quantity of fiction at a low price.

Munsey also had a ready-made audience in that similar publications called dime novels had been central to the reading lives of the working poor during the nineteenth century. Consisting of romance stories, mysteries, and family-oriented tales, dime novels became extinct in the 1890s as a result of postal regulations that made their circulation too costly for publishers to afford. Munsey's pulp magazine, as it happened, qualified for a cheap bulk postal rate that helped him distribute his magazine across the United States. As Munsey published genre stories similar to the ones that had been popular in the previous century's dime novels, his magazines also had an instant and popular appeal. Another factor in Munsey's success stemmed from the physical nature of the magazines themselves. The rough-hewn paper relegated formal beauty to a lesser position than the pragmatic end of providing entertainment, thereby satisfying the aesthetic disposition of the working classes. Munsey's audience clearly supported the new type of magazine he had created, as "circulation shot up. It reached three-hundred thousand on its twentieth birthday [1902] and five-hundred thousand on its twentieth-fifth birthday. [Its] winning format remained virtually unchanged until World War II" (Moonan 30).

Not surprisingly, other publishers quickly picked up this lucrative publishing format. Publications ranged from individuals putting together one title for a short span of time to large corporate publishing houses, such as Street & Smith and Popular Publications, producing extensive lists of titles from the early 1900s into the 1950s. As

the production of pulp magazines increased, publishers began to tailor the content of their magazines to appeal to specific niches within the mass audience. By 1920, almost all pulp magazines had become genre-specific. The most prevalent genres included sports stories for boys, crime fiction for adult men, romance stories for girls and women, and adventure-action stories for teenage boys. Crime, detective, and mystery magazines were mainstays in the pulp magazine market, with one of the most successful crime magazine being *The Black Mask* (later shortened to simply *Black Mask*). The origins of *Black Mask* provide particularly sharp insights into the cultural politics of producing pulp magazines.

American critics H.L. Mencken and G.J. Nathan were the creators of *Black Mask*, though this is not an accomplishment for which either of them wished to take credit. In the 1920s, both men were intent on establishing reputations as literary critics and intellectuals in the realm of elite culture. Their primary vehicle for establishing these reputations was their editorial work on the magazine *The Smart Set: A Magazine of Cleverness*. This magazine was intended for a high-class, discerning audience. As George H. Douglas notes, *The Smart Set* was designed to be a "literary and artistic monthly for the consumption of the rich, the idle, and the clever" (56). It was aimed specifically at "the Four Hundred," (Douglas 56), a group of roughly four hundred independently wealthy Americans who were thriving in the economic expansion of the early twentieth century. Ironically, *The Smart Set* was struggling for financial survival in 1914 despite its appeal to a class fraction with an abundance of disposable income. Aware of the success that publishers like Munsey were having, Mencken and Nathan decided to put together a pulp magazine that could generate enough income to support

The Smart Set. They did so with a certain derision toward the content and style of profitable publications that were directed at the masses rather than the top echelon of American society.

They began with the two magazines *Parisienne* and *Saucy Stories*. Unlike *The Smart Set*, which presented itself as a site of cultural taste and social refinement, Mencken and Nathan's pulp titles promised the racy intrigues and exotic voyeurism that they believed had made other pulps successful. Proving the validity of this belief, both magazines underwent a rapid rise in circulation following their release. This phenomenon coincided with Mencken's caustic remark that "nobody ever went broke underestimating the taste of the American people" (Douglas 90). In a nice twist of irony, the high tastes to which Mencken wished to appeal did not support his efforts, but the low tastes he despised supported not only the pulp magazines, but indirectly sustained *The Smart Set*. Anxious to rid themselves of an enterprise they disliked, Mencken and Nathan sold both magazines to Eugene F. Crowe, one of *The Smart Set's* financial backers, in 1916. By 1920, however, *The Smart Set* was once again facing financial difficulties. Mencken and Nathan sought a solution through publishing a third pulp title, one that was dedicated to the genre of detective and mystery fiction.

In April 1920, *Black Mask* appeared on news-stands. In time, the magazine became famous as the origin of the hard-boiled detective genre. *Black Mask*'s innovation in introducing a new style of fiction elevated it above the lowly cultural position of other pulps. Additionally, the magazine gained literary prestige for the discovery of writers such as Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett. Both Hammett and Chandler published their first short stories with *Black Mask* and both writers were considered

masters of the hard-boiled genre. In 1929, the high literary publisher Alfred A. Knopf had signed Hammett to a book deal and was printing and promoting his work throughout the United States. Chandler signed on with Knopf in 1939. The works of both writers have been on the periphery of "high" art ever since. In contrast, most pulp stories—indeed, most pulp magazines—have been forgotten. In this sense, *Black Mask* is an aristocrat among pulp magazines. At the magazine's inception, however, it was just another pulp among hundreds and Mencken and Nathan considered their work on it degrading. Neither editor allowed their names to appear anywhere in the publication and in a letter to Ernest Brody, Mencken commented that "*The Black Mask* is a lousy magazine—all detective stories. […] Reading Mss. for it is a fearful job, but it has kept us alive during a very bad year" (180). This attitude contrasts sharply with Mencken's list of his reasons for editing *The Smart Set*:

> First, we enjoy monkeying with it. Secondly, we like to dig up new authors and give them their chance. Thirdly, there is the sporting interest: it is pleasant to overcome [financial] difficulties. Fourthly, running the magazine gives us a certain prestige, and helps our books. (Mencken 173)

Mencken's role in making new authors known to the public and his desire to acquire a prestige that would advance his own literary career made him a purveyor of high culture. As an editor, he could influence which authors were exposed to the educated readers to whom *The Smart Set* catered. As critic, he told those readers what their tastes ought to be, reinforcing the validity of his authorial recommendations. This authority was threatened by his work on pulp magazines.

The pulps were differentiated from *The Smart Set* in the field of cultural production in that Mencken's position in the field rested largely on his dedication to art that marked the elevated social and cultural status of writers, editors, and readers alike. This dedication was also marked by a refusal to permit a profit motive to enter into the creation of cultural works. By ignoring the material demands of production and consumption, Mencken built a reputation for himself as an practitioner of elite culture in which the "sole legitimate profit (i.e., recognition by one's peers) is increasingly asserted as the exclusive principle of evaluation" (Bourdieu, "Field" 50). Mencken and Nathan's work on pulp magazines, which they pursued exclusively for profit, was in direct conflict with their apparent dismissal of material demands. By associating with mass culture and a capitalist approach to publishing, Mencken risked undermining his professional stature and ruining his career: if his peers knew about his pulp editing, he would lose the elitist recognition on which his professional success was based.

Mencken's contradictory position in the cultural hierarchy is actually a part of the larger negotiation of cultural value and social power in which "high" culture and "low" culture are separated in order to maintain class boundaries. Transgressing these boundaries prompts what Andreas Huyssen calls "an anxiety of contamination" (*Great Divide* vii). As Huyssen argues in his analysis of the construction of an elite mode of modernist literature, "the emergence of early modernism in writers such as Flaubert and Baudelaire cannot be adequately understood on the basis of an assumed logic of "high" literary evolution alone. Modernism constituted itself through a conscious strategy of exclusion, an anxiety of contamination by its other: an increasingly consuming and engulfing mass culture" (*Great Divide* vii). Pulp magazines served a dual function in

sustaining high culture. First, they were most decidedly a part of mass culture and therefore excluded from the possibility of producing literature. In this manner, pulp magazines served as a lowly "other" against which elite culture could structure itself. Second, pulps such as *Parisienne*, *Saucy Stories*, and *Black Mask* could be exploited as a base commodity that funded high culture much the way that mass labour supported the economic power of the financially elite.

The lower-class nature of the pulps travelled with them as they crossed over the United States-Canada border. As many as 10 million American readers purchased pulp magazines each week throughout the 1920s and 30s. These numbers were augmented by a large Canadian audience among whom American pulps circulated for the first four decades of the twentieth century. On 6 December 1940, however, the Federal Government of Canada implemented the War Exchange Conservation Act, putting an end to the import of these goods. The Act was ostensibly designed to allocate the consumer dollars of Canadians to Canadian resources and Canadian-made products, yet it simultaneously prohibited goods that were associated with escapism and immorality. As historian Tina Loo and criminologist Carolyn Strange point out, the pulps were banned "alongside such frivolous items as chocolate, champagne, and playing cards" (12). Specifically, the pulps' position in the list of banned items placed them between the decadence of "champagne and all other sparkling wines" and the "playing cards, in packs or in sheet form" (*Statutes of Canada*, 4-5 George VI, Chap. 2) that denoted the sins of gambling and greed.

In itself, the ban on pulps included "periodical publications, unbound or paper bound, consisting largely of fiction or printed matter of a similar character, including

detective, sex, western, and alleged true crime or confession stories, and publications, unbound or paper bound, commonly known as comics" (*Statutes of Canada*, 4-5 George VI, Chap. 2). The Act did not, however, list American magazines aimed at the middle- and upper-classes. As pulp collector Don Hutchison comments, the Act "deprived kids of their *Superman* and *Captain America* fix, and working-class readers of familiar pulp fiction titles [while the readers of] prestigious "slick" magazines like *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Colliers* were unaffected by the restriction" (paragraph 2). In effect, the Act enforced a double standard for rich and poor readers in terms of what kinds of reading materials they could purchase. Further to this, it combined the inferior class status of the pulps with the belief that the pulps promoted moral degeneration and social debasement. At the start of the war, then, the government sought control over the reading matter of citizens who possessed the least economic and social power in Canadian society. Simultaneously, the Act expressed a generalized view of social and moral inferiority associated with working-class readers who purchased pulps. Both types of denigration worked in tandem with the critically decried literary poverty of the pulps.

If the Federal Government had a secondary motive of controlling, or even eradicating, the dissemination of a type of literature that the Act associated with sin and degradation, it utterly failed in achieving its goal. Economic demands prevailed over political decisions. A large market existed for pulp magazines, as readers across Canada were in the habit of purchasing the tales of mystery, romance, and adventure that had been sold at newsstands across the dominion for forty years. Until the National Library's purchase of Valentine's archive in 1996, pulp and comic book collectors like Don Hutchison and John Bell believed that this demand was met entirely by an industry of

plagiarism in which American tales were re-printed in Canada using Canadian paper. By making use of Canadian resources, these magazines could continue to sell American stories in Canada, while cashing in on war-time national pride by promoting themselves as purveyors of Canadian culture and contributors of the Canadian economy. The magazine *Science Fiction*, for example, advertised itself as a "truly all-Canadian magazine, conceived, edited, and written in Canada by Canadians," and encouraged its readers to buy the magazine as a way "spending our currency among ourselves [and] adding to our country's business" (Hutchison paragraph 4). Hutchison contradicts this rhetoric, noting that the "truth was exactly the opposite. All of the stories in the Canadian *Science Fiction* were lifted from U.S. editions of Blue Ribbon Magazines' *Science Fiction*, *Science Fiction Quarterly*, and *Future Fiction*" (paragraph 5).

As it turns out, pulp readers did have magazines other than the plagiarized pulps to purchase. Alec Valentine began publishing pulps that truly did print the original stories by Canadian writers that he claimed his magazines featured. Within six months of the War Conservation Act's parliamentary approval, Valentine was printing and selling a range pulp magazines. In the ten-year span that his company survived, he published over forty-four different magazine titles, with a title to represent every possible popular genre. *Yarns* told sports and adventure stories intended for young readers, *Stag* offered pornography to college-aged men, *Bill Wayne's Western Magazine* contained tales of the wild west, *Romantic Love Stories* sold romance fiction to women, and *Uncanny Tales* ventured into the supernatural and the occult. Valentine also published a number of true crime and crime fiction titles that targeted all adult Canadians interested in stories of crime and detection.

Of all of the magazines that remain in the National Library's collection, the crime titles are the most prolific. Not only are there more true crime and crime fiction magazines titles than all of the other titles combined, the true crime titles also had longer print runs than many of the other magazines. As a result, crime magazines make up roughly sixty percent of the collection's 450 different issues. The crime magazines can be broken into two categories: fiction and true crime. The true crime magazine titles far outnumber the crime fiction magazines. There are fifteen true-crime titles and only four fiction titles. At the same time, the true crime magazines had print runs that lasted for between three and nine years. The true crime titles represented in the archive include *Best True Fact Detective, Certified Detective Cases, Chief Detective Stories, Daring Crime Cases, Factual Detective Stories, Feature Detective Cases, Line-Up Detective Cases, Scoop Detective, Special Detective Cases, Startling Crime Cases, True Bootleg Crime Cases, True Gangster Crime Cases,* and *Women in Crime*. Altogether, there are 192 true crime magazines in the collection and twenty-one crime fiction publications. There are, in fact, only four fiction titles, including *Daring Detective*, *Dare-Devil Detective Stories*, *Five Star Detective Stories*, and *World-Wide Detective*. These titles were Valentine's foundational magazines as his publishing venture got underway. All of them first appeared in between May and July 1941, just a few short months after the trade embargo was established, and all of them appear to have ceased publication after the ban on pulps was lifted in 1945 and American magazines once again flooded the Canadian market. The true crime magazines continued to sell in mass quantities until the collapse of Valentine's magazine business in 1949.

Explanations regarding the survival of the true crime magazines are speculative at best. One possibility is that the true crime magazines tended to publish more stories set in Canada than the crime fiction magazines. Set during the Klondike Gold Rush or the wild west of the prairies, these magazines offered a sensationalized slice of Canadian history and social life that may have appealed to a large group of Canadian pulp readers. At the same time, true crime magazines upheld a belief in the power of the legal and judicial systems to maintain social order and security. As Skene-Melvin notes, in many Canadian true crime tales "the common thread is the assertion of national authority [...] represented particularly by the scarlet tunics" (10) of the RCMP. In the post-World War II era, Canadian true crime was reassuring in that law enforcement officers were consistently portrayed as ethical, intelligent, and devoted to the protection of the public. Alternately, law-breakers were always apprehended and brought to justice. As a whole, Canadian consumers may have been loyal to Valentine's true crime magazines because of the positive image of Canada that the magazines conveyed.

Valentine's editorial policies and business practices are difficult to ascertain based on the materials in the archive. In assessing the importance of publisher's archives, Robert Darnton asks "how did publishers draw up contracts with authors, build alliances with booksellers, negotiate with political authorities, and handle finances, suppliers, shipments, and publicity?" (19) and concludes that "the answers to these questions would carry the history of books deep into the territory of social, economic, political history, to their mutual benefit" (19). With this in mind, and given the paucity of archival materials that could provide these kinds of insights into Valentine's publishing house, I approached pulp collector George Flie for an interview. Flie knew Valentine for almost twenty years

and purchased the pulp archive directly from him in 1987. When Flie acquired the archive, Valentine informed him that there was a representative copy of "around seventy-five percent of all the magazines he had published" (Flie 2003). While this makes the archive a relatively comprehensive collection of his finished products, the remnants of materials relating to editorial processes and production are fragmented and incomplete.

The archive does not reveal the way in which stories were selected and it does not explain whether or not Valentine had a vision for his magazines or if he was singularly interested in providing entertainment for profit. In keeping with this, the archive also does not provide extensive insight into the day-to-day practices of the house, nor does it explicate the financial underpinnings of the operation.. My re-construction of the internal workings of Valentine's publishing house focuses on the aspects of Valentine's editorial and managerial practices that can be pieced together using anecdotal evidence provided by George Flie in combination with the existing archival records. These fragments show that Valentine and his editors struggled to balance economic demands with editorial content in their effort to appeal to Canadian pulp readers. This struggle plays out as both a reason for the pulp's position in the cultural hierarchy as well as an effect of that position.

The archival information shows that very few people worked at the publishing house. A letter from Daniel Halperin, who wrote consistently for Valentine throughout the 1940s, closes with the words "say hi to Max and the girl in the office" (Halperin Box 20B), suggesting that Valentine's only co-workers were his assistant editor Max Gray and an unnamed female office assistant. Flie confirmed that this was indeed the case, but he added that Valentine's wife played an integral role in the editorial work as well.

Unfortunately, a total of three letters remain from all of the correspondence, two of them from American authors in addition to the letter from Halperin. Copies of letters written by Valentine or his co-workers are not present. In regard to this absence of records, Flie explained that Valentine's key writers lived in Toronto. This made in-person exchanges and friendships possible while negating the need for official correspondence. The friendly atmosphere at the office was, according to Flie not only characteristic of Valentine's personality, but also an important part of how he wanted his publishing house to function. As Flie remarked "Al had a lot of energy, and he was a really nice guy. He considered his years publishing pulp the high-water mark of his life. He had fun, and he made sure everyone else had fun, too" (2003).[1]

An atmosphere of fun and excitement may have been a necessary antidote to the heavy workload of producing between twelve and forty-four different magazines each month. In addition to time constraints, money was always in short supply. Where the *Argosy* and *Black Mask* generated huge profits for Munsey and Mencken and Nathan, Valentine's pulps only earned enough income to keep the company going from one month to the next. The financial constraints Valentine faced, and the solutions he found to them, underwrote the fiction and format of pulp magazines. For example, the handful of manuscripts in the archive indicate that the stories were printed without many editorial changes. For their work, writers were paid "at most twenty dollars a story" (Flie 2003). Valentine also found ways to reduce the costs of producing covers. Covers were, in fact, the most expensive part of a pulp magazine to produce. Artists and models, whose fees tended to be higher than those of writers, had to be paid. Additionally, the reproduction of thousands of colour covers cost far more than the printing of black-and-white pulp

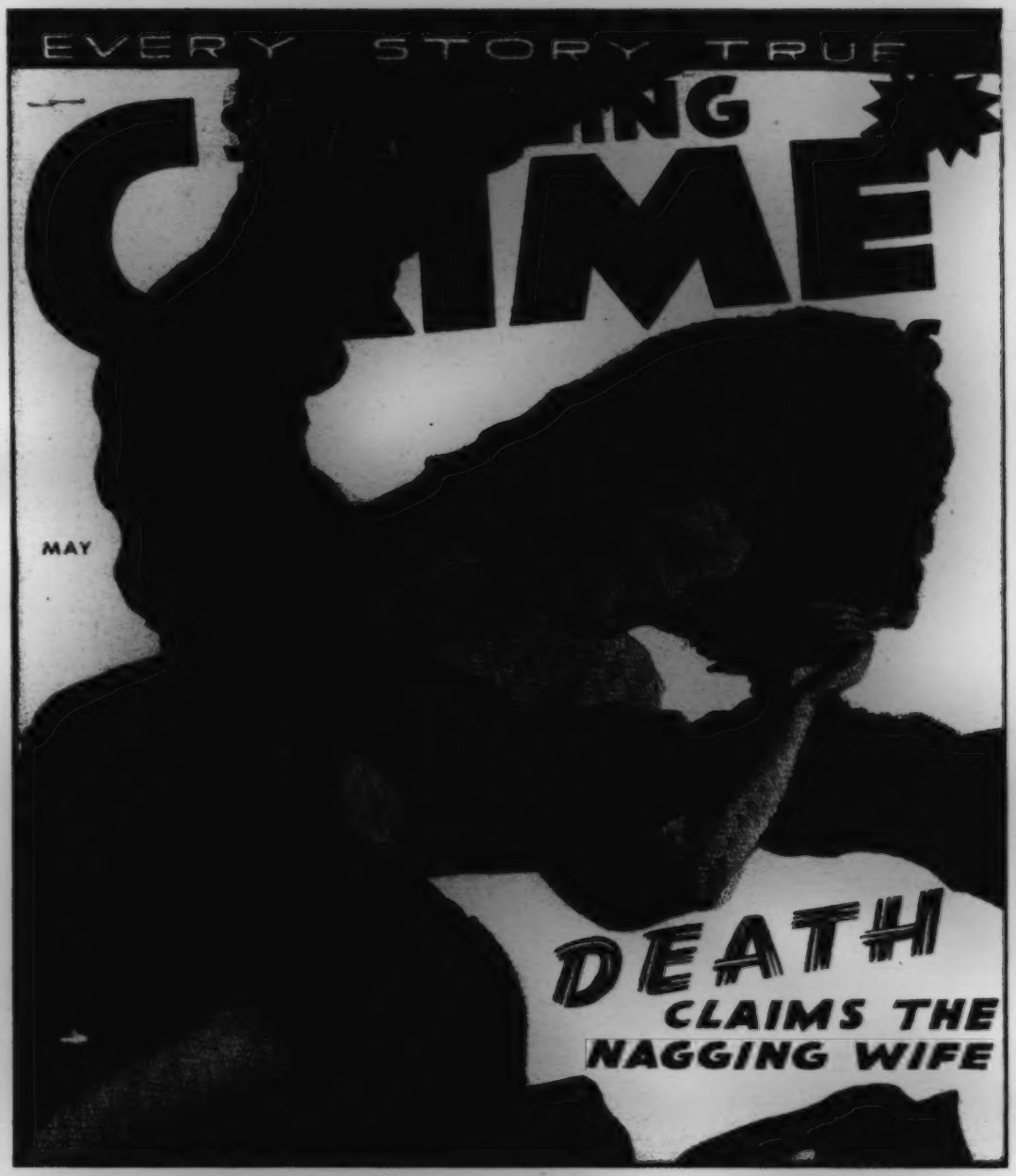

Figure 1. Ironically captioned with the words "Death Claims the Nagging Wife," this cover of *Startling Crime Cases* features Alec Valentine's wife. In an effort to sustain the publishing house by reducing the costs of cover production, Valentine, his wife, and some of the pulp writers would pose for cover paintings so that models would not need to be hired.

Figure 2. The man pictured strangling a woman on this cover of *Daring Detective* is very likely one of Valentine's most prolific pulp writers, Thomas P. Kelly. Of all the magazines in the National Library's collection, this is the only marred by any kind of damage. That said, its worn paper and faded colours speak to the rapid deterioration of pulp magazines if they are not carefully preserved.

pages. In order to reduce these costs, covers were recycled across different issues and over time. The cover for a 1943 issue of *Scoop Detective*, for example, was also used as the cover for a 1945 issue of *True Gangster Crime Cases* and a 1947 issue of *Women in Crime*. In order to avoid paying models, Valentine, his wife, and some of his writers would sometimes pose for the cover art themselves.[2] Through these means, Valentine and his wife "did most of the work themselves, with little extra help" (Flie 2003) in order to keep the publishing enterprise economically viable.

Valentine took on the dual roles business owner and editor-in-chief of all the magazines his company printed. This duality required balancing economics against aesthetic considerations. One of the three letters in the archive, written by pulp author Daniel Halperin, makes this evident. Explaining a delay in getting a manuscript to Valentine on time, Halperin remarked that he would "return to Toronto a week from today and will drop in to see you. I wish the market could stand a detective novel of [large] size; I've got a terrific plot built around an attractive sort of super sleuth. I'm sure it would go well but no doubt you and Max Gray are the best judges of the market" (Halperin Box 20B). Halperin's letter clearly emphasizes the determining power of the market in selecting works for publication, and the role of the editor in gauging the demands of the marketplace. The pulps were not devoted to literary achievement or experimentation, but to economic survival and the best survival strategy consisted of providing readers with works similar to those that had sold well in the past.

In large part, the driving force behind the formulaic nature of pulp fiction is derived from the economic demands of mass-market publishing. Drawing a comparison between selling soup for consumption and pulp magazines, long-time American pulp

editor Harold Brainerd Hersey argues that "fiction periodicals may be justifiably compared to canned soup displayed in brilliant wrappers on the tradesman's shelves. Their quality must be even: never too thin, never too thick. The professional editor knows precisely what he needs in order to manufacture this standard product" (107). Putting a different spin on this philosophy, Clive Bloom argues that the pulps are a form of "trash art [that] speaks for itself, but within those constituting frameworks of commercial necessity and ephemerality that mark all trash" (4). Working within this framework of commercial necessity, Valentine published fast-paced tales of crime that large numbers of readers consistently purchased. Most of these stories evince a predictable writing style and stock characters with exciting plot twists and overtures of sexuality and violence. Not intended to last beyond a short span of circulation, and pressed for financial survival, Valentine's magazines had to be edited according to an aesthetic that balanced the creativity to which Halperin's letter alludes with the saleability required to stay in business.

Alongside guiding the internal practices of magazine publication, editors played the role of reader liaison. One of Canada's major slick-paper magazines of the 1940s, *Maclean's* communicated with readers through editorials. These editorials addressed their audience of middle- to upper-class readers with an advanced education and a literary background. In doing so, the editorials affirmed their readers' desire to belong to a culturally savvy and economically secure class fraction. Beyond this affirmation, the editorials also instructed their audience on reading practices in a way that reassured them of their competency as readers. *Maclean's*, a Toronto-based national magazine that published three or four works of original Canadian fiction every two weeks, featured a

regular editorial column called "In the Editor's Confidence." Under this auspice of sharing the secrets of the magazine's construction, Editor-in-Chief H. Napier-Moore explained his editorial decisions and provided background information on many of the writers who were published under his supervision.

Napier-Moore employed two rhetorical strategies in his editorials. First, he made his readers feel that they had a personal stake in the magazine; his editorials were designed to make readers feel as though they were privy to the otherwise mysterious internal workings of the magazine. On a material level, this strategy helped ensure consumer loyalty by making readers feel that they had something personal invested in the magazine. Second, Napier-Moore made a point of telling readers why a given work merited publication. By doing this, he constructed a definition of appropriate middle-class reading material. A typical example of this process appears in the 15 January 1941 editorial. H. Napier-Moore wrote:

> There is a neat piece of whimsy on page fifteen—"Achilles and Willie" by Matt Armstrong. We haven't any doubt that you will recognize the characters. Mr. Armstrong is a newcomer to *Maclean's*, but last April he won the Women's Canadian Club Literary Award, and he has sold a number of stories to other publications. (2)

Napier-Moore assures readers they will enjoy the story in question; he then goes on to supply the literary credentials of the story's author. According to Bourdieu, this is an act of consecration:

> the fundamental stake in literary struggles is the monopoly of literary legitimacy, i.e., *inter alia*, the monopoly of the power to say with authority who are

> authorized to call themselves writers; or, to put it another way, it is the monopoly of the power to consecrate producers or products (we are dealing with a world of belief and the consecrated writer is one who has the power to consecrate and to win assent when he or she consecrates an author or a work—with a preface, a favourable review, a prize). ("Field" 42)

Napier-Moore, while not a consecrated writer himself, is nonetheless in a position of cultural authority. By informing the *Maclean's* audience not only of his selection of a story, but also of an independent body's judgement of the quality of the writing, the editor assures his readers that they are engaging with a worthy class of literary production.

In other editorials, Napier-Moore presents his readers with idealized representations of the typical Canadian slick-magazine fiction writer. On 15 February 1942, for example, Napier-Moore describes the excitement that he and another editor felt upon discovering a new writer. In his words:

> a few weeks ago, Jack Paterson, our fiction editor, burst into this office. [...] "Here's a find," he said, gleefully thrusting a manuscript under our nose. "Here's a *story*. Here's a lad who can *write*. Name is H. Gordon Green. Never heard of him. But he's got something. (2)

Neither Napier-Moore nor Paterson provide an explanation for the "something" that this new author possesses. The lack of definition carries the implication that this "something" is talent, thereby showcasing H. Gordon Green's story as a unique work shaped by an individual gift for writing. The idea of talent and originality underpinned the idea of the author that Napier-Moore constructed for his audience. Building on this, Napier-Moore

goes onto to establish a particular authorial identity for this new writer. He states that Green will enter McGill medical school in a few months; this fact establishes that Green's professional or class status is similar to that of *Maclean's* readers and therefore deserving of their recognition and respect. Napier-Moore also notes the hard work and effort that Green put into becoming a medical student, which sets him up as an exemplary Canadian citizen for readers to admire alongside the quality of his fiction.

Valentine, in contrast, did not present his readers with insight into his vision for a given magazine, nor did he provide reassuring explanations for the selection of a given story, nor did he publish editorials designed to introduce and celebrate particular authors. In Bourdieu's terms, Valentine did not consecrate his selections of pulp fiction for his readers. Valentine's opinions and ideas were absent from the pages of his magazines. In fact, an understanding of Valentine's role in pulp publishing would have been nebulous at best without the help of George Flie. Only the letter from Halperin is addressed to him (the other two letters were sent to an editor named Max Gray) and contributors are asked to direct their stories to "the editor." Paradoxically, Valentine was ubiquitous amid his pulps, as he oversaw the publication of all of them. Given the diversity of genres with which Valentine was engaged, his absence as an editorial figure may in practice have been a wise marketing strategy. Just as Mencken risked tainting his critical authority by associating with mass culture, Valentine risked tainting some of his magazines by admitting his involvement with others. To put it in more specific terms, he risked losing the readers *Yarns*, his family-oriented magazine of sports stories and small-town adventures, by openly positioning himself as the editor of violent or salacious magazines

like *Women in Crime* or *Stag*. In this light, Valentine's editorial avoidance of his readers was a smart commercial maneuver.

While Valentine resisted commenting to his readers, the physical nature of the pulps constituted form of communication with their audience that was independent of words. In the *The Textual Condition*, Jerome McGann articulates a relationship between a printed work's "conceptual message" (77) and its "physical medium" (77). He identifies these two aspects as "a double helix of perceptual codes: the linguistic codes, on one hand, and the bibliographic code on the other" (77). The linguistic code includes a work's formal use of language and its possible meanings; in terms of reception, the linguistic code is the effect that a text has on the reader's mind. The bibliographic code consists of the work's printed nature, including its paper, binding, typography, and visual design; the bibliographic code is the impact that a text has on the reader's senses. Such a classification echoes the Cartesian separation of body and mind, and it is a separation that, according to McGann, limits the complexity of our understanding of texts. Opposing these constraints, he argues that "all texts, like all other things human, are embodied phenomena, and the body of the text is not exclusively linguistic. By studying texts through a distinction drawn between linguistic and bibliographic codes, we gain at once a more global and a more uniform view of texts and the processes of textual production" (13). He calls this approach to critical study "material hermeneutics" (15). In the second chapter, I will take up the reception of pulp magazines in Canada in conjunction with close readings of three stories; this discussion will constitute an understanding of pulp fiction's linguistic codes. In the following pages, I will be dealing

with the bibliographic coding of the Canadian pulps and the way in which this coding situated the pulps in the field of cultural production.

Valentine exploited the bibliographic code of the pulps, a code with everyday familiarity for Canadian readers, to rapidly establish and expand his publishing house. Specifically, he designed his magazines to be indistinguishable from the American ones that could no longer be bought. Knowing that he was supplying a pre-existing mass readership with materials that had inundated news-stands before the War Exchange Conservation Act, Valentine launched his pulps into an already well-worn groove of popular circulation. Like their American counterparts, his crime fiction magazines were seven-by-ten inches in size and consisted of 128 pages of pulp paper wrapped in brightly-colored painted covers. The true crime magazines were eight by eleven inches in size and featured ninety-eight pages of text alongside black-and-white photographs. The internal layout of the magazines was identical to the American periodicals: two columns of text, punctuated by teasing blurbs at the beginning of stories and black-and-white drawings at the start of the feature story. The titles that Valentine gave his magazines were so similar to American titles that Valentine became entangled in disputes over copyright. As a note at the end of the July 1941 issue of the newly named *Dare-Devil Detective Stories* explains, "readers will remember former issues as *Daring Detective*, a name which had already been copyrighted by an American publishing house, and of which, at the time we had no knowledge" (94). Rather than designing his magazines in a manner that would emphasize their status as new publications produced in Canada, Valentine imitated his American counterparts at the visual and tactile level in order to benefit from their already established popularity.

His strategy in this regard proved enormously successful. The Canadian pulps gained an immediate audience and Valentine was able to expand from the three titles (*Daring Laff*, *Uncanny Tales*, and *Daring Detective*) that he printed in the early months of 1941 to thirteen titles by the end of the year. By 1942, he not only maintained these print runs, but also added another ten titles to his publication list. Most of these magazines became his long-running true crime periodicals. While the pulps' success in the marketplace was grounded in their bibliographic coding, their physical quality undercut their legitimacy as cultural objects. The uniformity of style and design across the different titles classified the magazines as mass-produced commodities. Walter Benjamin, in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," takes up the problem of mass- and mechanically-produced articles of culture. He argues that mechanically reproduced objects lack authenticity and uniqueness. He terms this dual complex, authenticity and singularity, as the "aura" of a work of art. As he explains:

> that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art. This is a symptomatic whose significance points beyond the realm of art. One might generalize by saying: the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. (221)

The pulps had no aura, nor did their producers strive to imbue them with one. Rapidly proliferating as a body of works and rapidly produced as individual items, pulp magazines were commodities rather than instances of unique, individualized literary art.

The labour involved in producing mass quantities of pulp magazines further reduced their literary integrity. Putting together an average of twenty-three magazines each month involved selecting stories, designing the page layout, preparing photographs

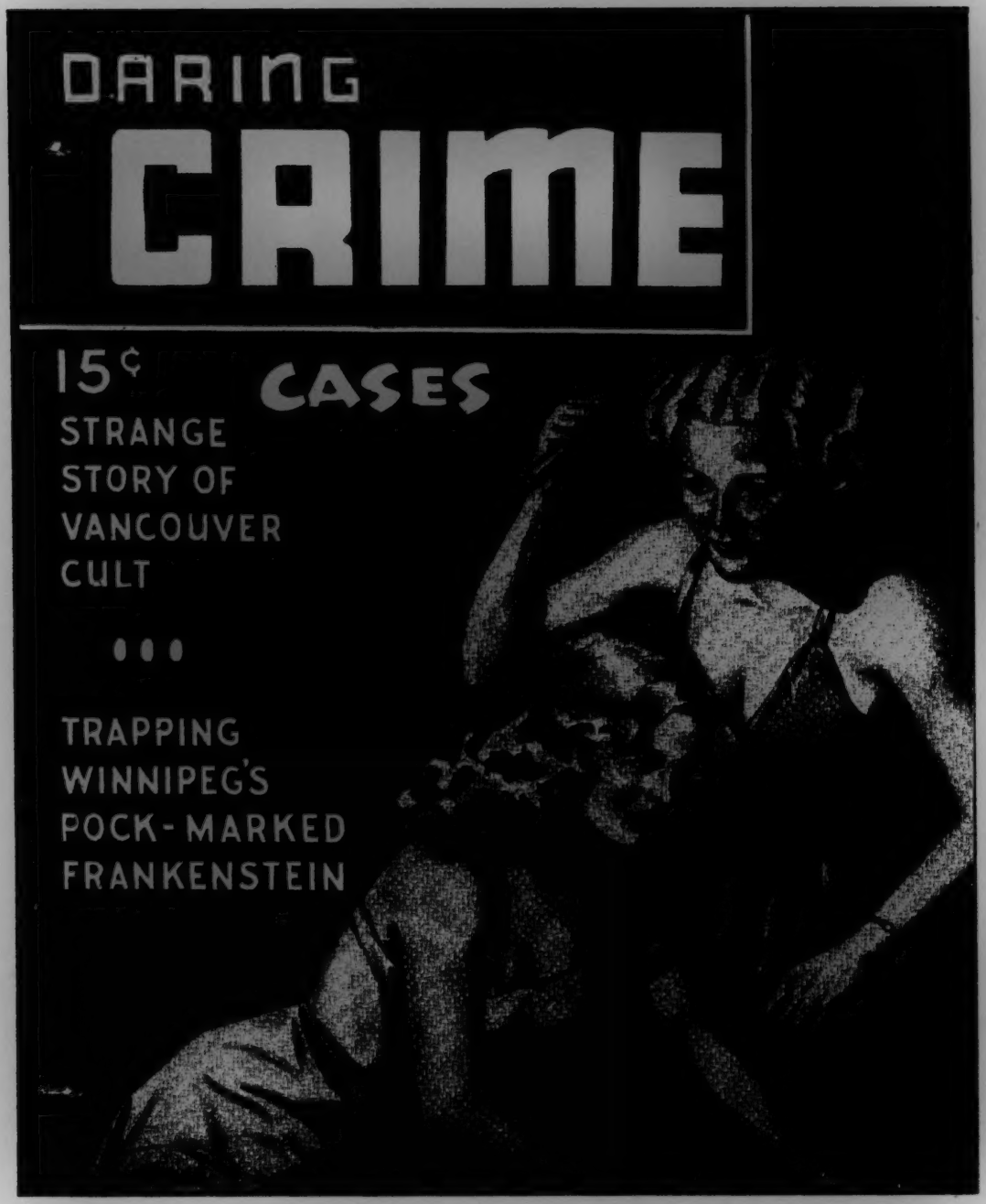

Figure 3. Designed to attract the reader's eye, this cover is one of the Pulp Magazine Collection's most explicit examples of the sexual voyeurism used to market pulp magazines.

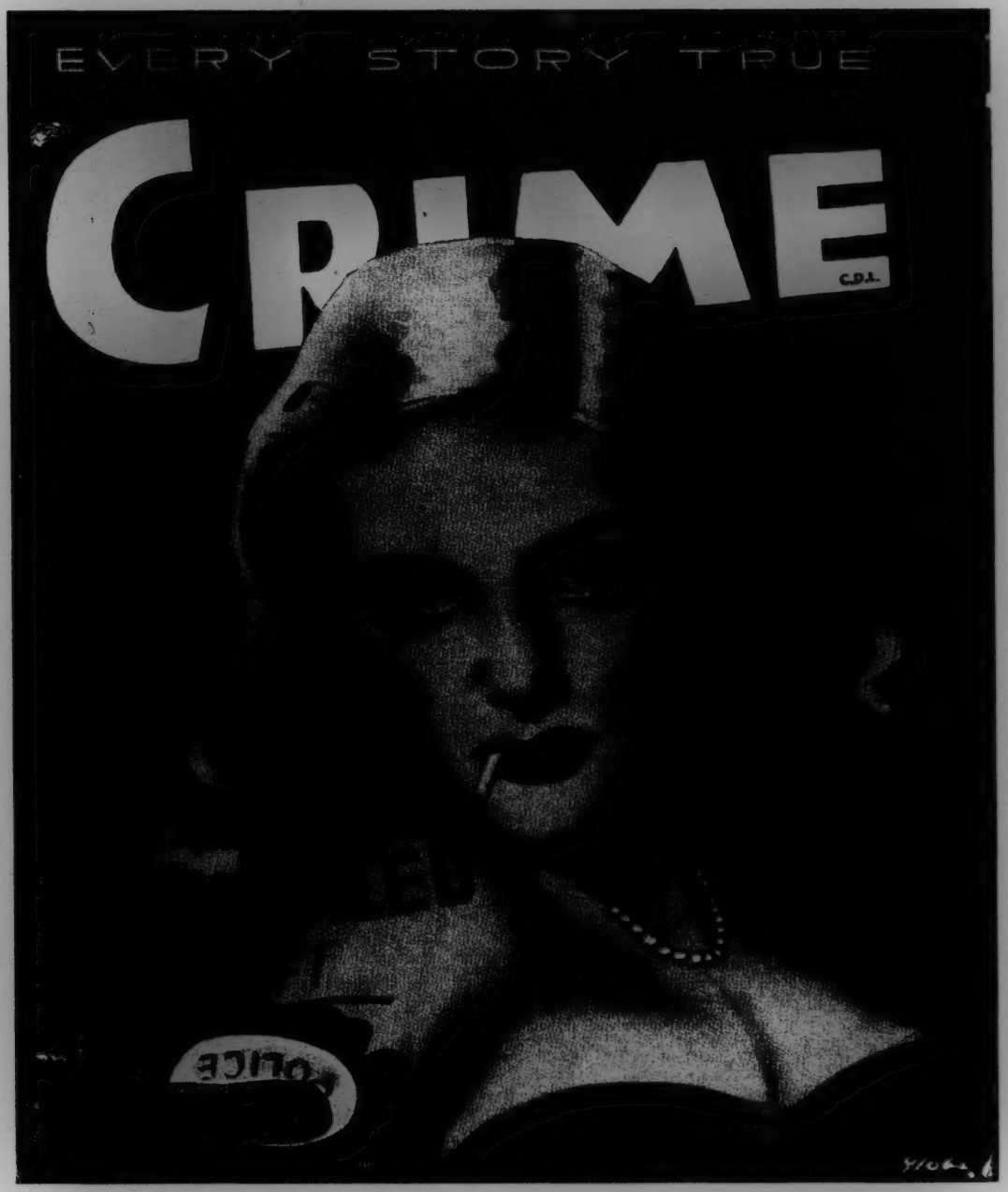

Figure 4. With a sub-heading that reads "Hardboiled but Soft," this cover plays with the ideas of violence, female sexuality, and criminal investigation. The woman featured appears to be, once again, Valentine's wife. Dressed in a classy outfit, her image implicates the wealthy in immorality equal to, if not worse than, the act of reading the pulp fiction of the lower classes.

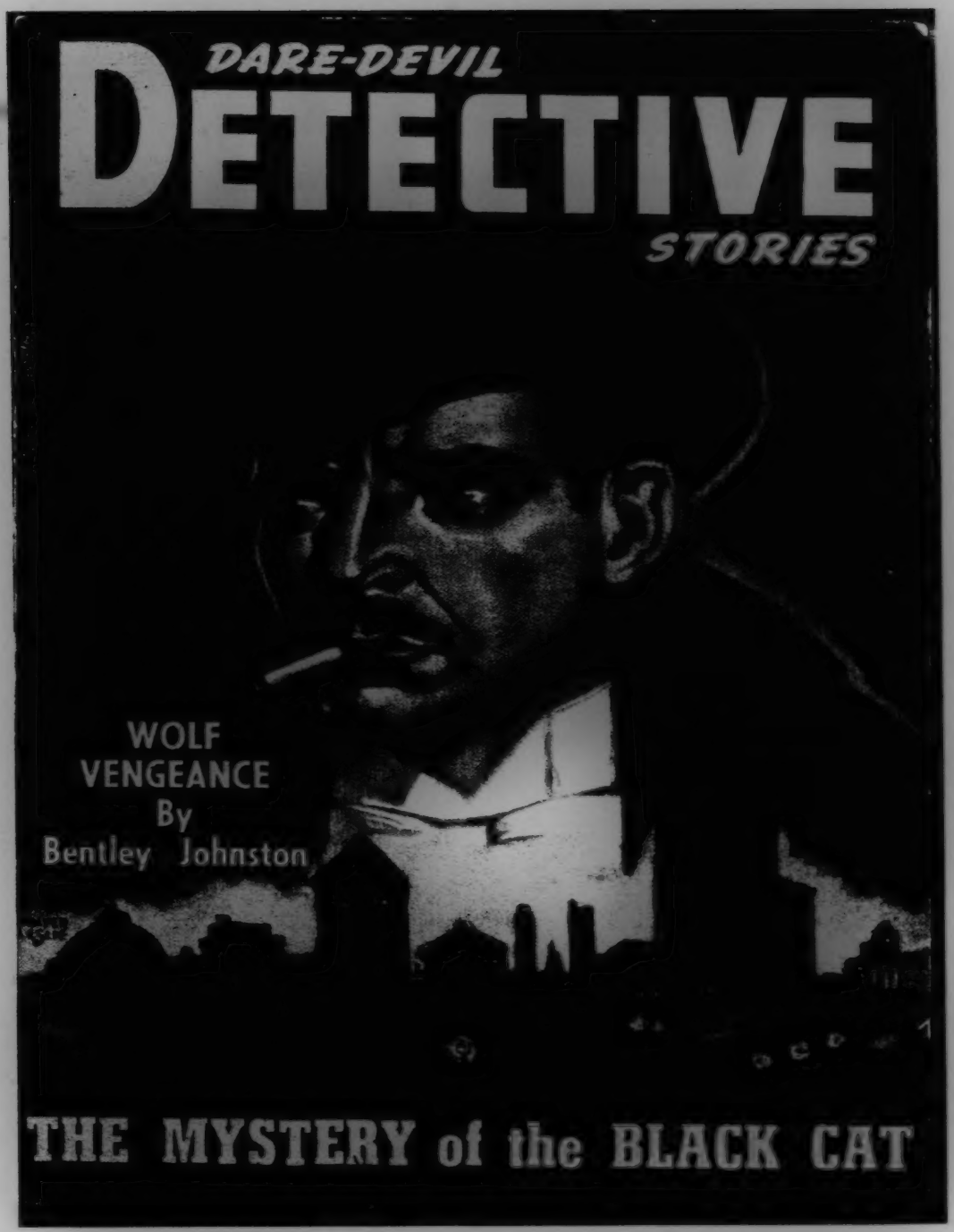

Figure 5. Like the cover of *Startling Crime Cases*, the image here presents a wealthy-looking man presiding over a grimy-looking industrial cityscape. The juxtaposition visually conveys the hierarchical social and economic structure of the society in which pulp magazines circulated.

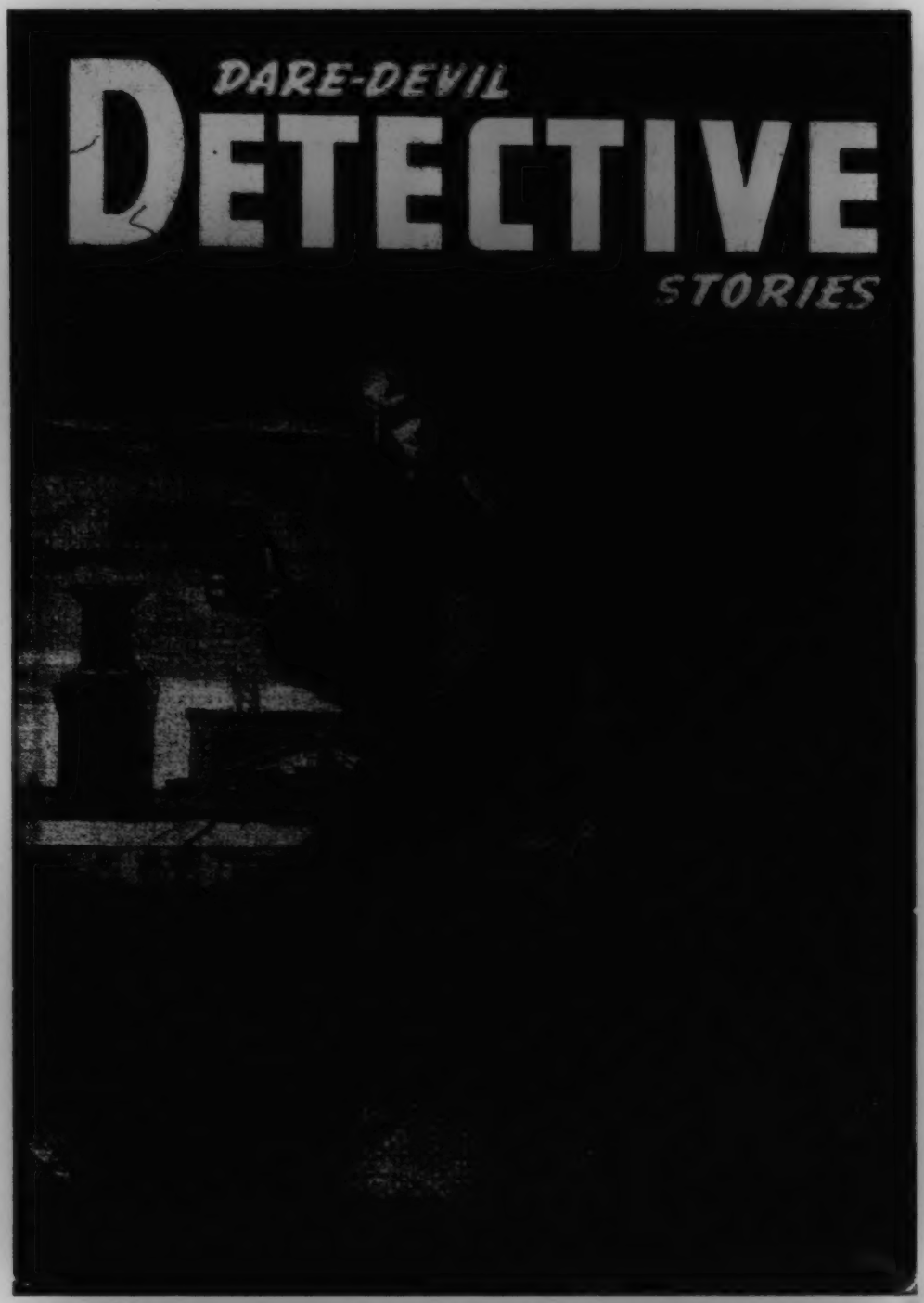

Figure 6. Some covers featured explicit scenes of violence, such as this shoot-out, that spoke to the most commonly represented crime within the magazines: murder.

for the true crime magazines, having the cover painted, and finally typesetting and proof-reading the text. Such processes resembled assembly-line work rather artistic creation. The impact of mechanical techniques and factory strategies of production is evident in the lack of typographical integrity in the pulps, as numerous errors that run throughout the magazines. In the text of "Edmonton's Maniacal Killer and the Innocent Girl," for example, a murder witness is identified in the story as "*Private* A.J. Lajoie," but the caption beneath his adjoining photograph reads "*Primate* A.J. Lajoie." This error, and others like it, show that producing a clean copy was not a high priority in physically producing pulp. Their divorce from orthographical, grammatical, or typographical correctness mirrored their separation from literary propriety.

Beyond their internal print structure, pulp packaging emphasized their commodity status: lurid cover scenes served as the primary marketing tool for the magazines. While the editors encouraged readers to buy subscriptions, the news-stand was by far the largest point of sale for pulps. In order to attract the eye of the purchaser, the covers displayed brightly-colored paintings or, in the case of the late 1940s true crime magazines, photographs of beautiful-but-bad men and women. The most common images vividly portray extreme violence and sexual voyeurism. Of the four covers presented here, the first features an explicitly sexual image while the second, sub-titled "Hardboiled but Soft" combines sexuality with the violence and mean streets elemental to the hard-boiled crime genre. The third cover, in which a well-dressed man dominates the space above a squalid cityscape implicates the control of the wealthy individual over the materially impoverished masses in the society in which pulp magazines circulated. The final cover portrays a straightforward scene of danger that speaks to the centrality of murder and death in pulp fiction. More than

simply selling the magazines, these images of danger, sexuality, and social disparity fixated on the human body. As high art tends to divorce itself from material concerns in favour of intellectual and creative expression, the pulps' concern with the human body marked them as vulgar. Moreover, the profit-motive that drove the production of cover art denigrated both the art work and the fiction it enveloped as cheap commodities. The images themselves marked the pulps as objects of sin, licentiousness, and immorality. Pulp magazine covers visually located the periodicals as an intellectually, socially, and morally degraded aspect of Canadian print culture.

The downtrodden position of the pulps meant many pulp writers did not want to be identified. Flie noted that some of the writers worked full-time for the *Toronto Star* and, while pulp writing was a fun side-job, they had professional reputations that could be ruined if their association with the pulps became known (2003). As such, most of Valentine's fiction writers published under pseudonyms. As both Michael Denning and Erin A. Smith have pointed out, pulp authorship is a contested and convoluted area of pulp production. In his book on nineteenth-century dime novels, *Mechanic Accents*, Denning observes the similarities between factory work and fiction writing in the preparation of the nineteenth-century dime novels that were the predecessors of the pulps. The need for "quantity, speed, and fixed demands of publishers" shaped the writing process (21). Authors were also separated from the proprietary ownership of their work. As Denning explains, in dime-novel writing "the trend was toward industrial production based on division of labour and corporate trademarks, the pseudonyms of the market" (23). One of these pseudonyms was "Old Sleuth," a pen-name used by writer Harlan Page Halsey in 1872 in his work for George Munro's *Fireside Companion*. Two legal disputes over the pseudonym took place. In the

first dispute, another author attempted to publish under the pseudonym; the courts ruled that the stories must be written by Halsey. In the second dispute, Halsey tried to move from Munro's house to Street & Smith, but the courts ruled that he could not take the pseudonym with him. It was deemed the property of the publishing house, making it possible for other writers working for Munro to create stories and print them under the name "Old Sleuth." Building on these problems, Smith argues that such differences were a key factor in the separation between "high" cultural definitions of the author and pulp authors:

> whereas respectable authors were paid for writing a story—a literary work—pulp authors were paid for the quantity of words they produced. Whereas more self-consciously literary writers thought of their work as creative self-expression, pulp writers often did not get or take credit for their work at all. Writing "serious" fiction required broad reading in Western classics; writing pulp fiction required no more education than that of the average man on the street. While slick-paper fiction was framed as a unique, creative utterance, pulp fiction was merely a commodity. (22)

Smith's comparisons between serious slick-paper fiction and commodified pulp fiction mark the concept of authorship in the pulp era by two key traits: the writer's material ownership of their work and the writer's individual ingenuity in penning an original, creative work.

Historically contingent, the idea of the author has changed over time in relation to the printing processes and class politics of a given era. The idea that predominated in the twentieth century emerged out of the assertion of the capitalist economy and bourgeois aesthetics of the nineteenth century. In articulating the relationship of the author the printing press, book historians Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin note that "the last profession associated with printing, one that was bound to the press and was born because of it, is the

profession of author" (159). The establishment of this profession is economically grounded: printed books made an author's work into a into a saleable commodity. Where writers had received payment for their work through system of patronage in which they would include "a flattering dedication, for which present they anticipated reward in the form of a gift of money" (Febrve and Martin 160), by the early seventeenth century increasing numbers of authors began to sell their manuscripts to a bookseller. By selling the manuscript, the bookseller became the owner of the text and therefore the party to profit for years from the sustained sale of a successful book while the author received nothing after the initial payment. This system of exchange persisted until a series of court cases in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century altered the status of the author.

In "Literary Property Determined," Mark Rose traces the legal disputes which culminated in 1839 as the authors William Wordsworth, Robert Southey, Thomas Carlyle, and Hartley Coleridge submitted petitions to Parliament that eventually resulted in the Copyright Act of 1842. The Act provided a copyright term of "the author's life plus seven years or forty-two years from publication, whichever was longer" (237). The Act made the writer the sole owner of a work, thereby making the writer's work into a commodity from which the writer could profit. Reflecting on this transition, Febrve and Martin comment that once the writer "had a share in the profits [of his work] he had to try and produce a bestseller; and so he had to aim for the widest possible readership. In the end this perhaps served to encourage hack writing rather than work of the highest quality" (166). In other words, the distinction between the high-quality author and the hack writer rests largely on the distinction between creating an artistic work for a select audience and producing a marketable commodity for the masses. Underlying this distinction is the idea that "originality

distinguished the true author from the hack. [...] The emphasis on originality and novelty, introducing as it did a new hierarchy of literary endeavor, underscored the special relationship that the author bore to his text. If a work was original it was also unique, the distinctive consequence of the writer's imagination" (Brewer 246). Pulp writing, with its generic conventions, was the perfect foil to high literature; it constituted a lowly "other" against which the producers and consumers of high art could define their tastes. In a sense, genre fiction was a mechanized form of literature. Filled with variations of stock characters, predictable dialogue, and pre-determined plots, formulaic fiction was the linguistic equivalent of Benjamin's physical copying of works of art. Without the drive towards originality, pulp authors and the stories they published contradicted the demand for individual creativity that underpinned the production of high art.

Some writers, such as Thomas P. Kelley, seemed completely unconcerned about the status they were accorded in the cultural hierarchy. Celebrating the temporary restraint on the dominance of American goods in Canadian society, Kelley called the 1940s "the golden days for the Canadian freelance writer—the days when the demand exceeded the supply" (Colombo 13). The self-proclaimed "king of Canadian pulp writers" (Colombo 13), Kelley contributed to all of Valentine's fiction magazines and to many of the true crime periodicals as well. He claimed to write up to three 4 000-word stories a day and to publish under thirty different pseudonyms, some of which included Gene Bannerman, Rex Hayes, Valentine Worth, and Wellington Price. Scott Young, an intern at *MacLean's* in the 1940s, knew Kelley. In the *Globe and Mail*, Young related this anecdote:

> Kelley had been walking along Wellington Street, past the offices of some pulp magazines, when an editor saw him going by and rushed into the street and said he

> needed a story immediately for one of his confession magazines. "Two hundred bucks if you can do it before noon," the editor said. "So I walked in," Kelley said, "and he sat me down at a typewriter and I said "What's the title?" and the editor said "Type this at the top: I WAS A LOVE SLAVE." Ten pages later, and in time to meet me for lunch, he had done the story and collected his money. (Young 7)

Valentine's offices were in fact located at 78 Wellington Street in Toronto, making either him or one his assistants the editor in question. Young's anecdote demonstrates the manner in which pulp stories were written for Valentine's magazines. Speed was important, as was the immediate saleability of the story. Kelley wrote the story on demand with a particular publication in mind. In fact, the editor provided him with a title designed to sell the story before it had even been written: the commercial concern completely underwrote the creative process of writing the fiction. Additionally, the story is clearly not a part of the writer's experience, nor is it a story inspired by his individualized artistic vision. While the appearance of this story in a confessional magazine is a claim to the story's authenticity, in reality the story is a work of pure fiction. Written on command, "I Was a Love Slave" marks the separation between the writer's identity and his written works. Beyond merely being the producer of a lascivious commodity, Kelley was also disavowing his role in creating the story. These types of writing strategies mark Kelley as a hack writer rather than an artist.

Beyond writing for the pulps, Kelley is known to have written five novels, including the famous true crime books *The Black Donelleys* and *Vengeance of the Black Donelleys*. With the exception of a ten-year gap in the 1980s, these two novels have not been out of print since their appearance in the 1950s. Despite their popularity, and Kelley's legendary prolific writing skills, almost nothing is known about him. In an effort to compile biographical

information on the man, writer John Robert Colombo interviewed several people who knew Kelley. The only people who had any contact with him were the editors, publishers, and writers who had interacted with him on a purely professional level. None of the people Colombo approached knew Kelley very well. As Kelley's publisher Jack Stoddart Sr. remarked, "I was surprised to find we have no background information on him, not even an author's file" (Colombo 13). In an effort to learn more, Colombo printed an article in the *Globe and Mail* titled "Has Anybody Seen Thomas P. Kelley?" The article outlined everything that was known about the author, but noted that "biographical details are sketchy" (Colombo 13) and that locating concrete information like his birth date and place of residence was impossible. I contacted Colombo to ask if the newspaper article had resulted in any leads. It had not. Thomas P. Kelley, despite his prolific publications, is an authorial phantom. According to George Flie, the explanation for Kelley's sheer ethereality is simple: there is no Thomas P. Kelley.

While Kelley openly acknowledged that he used at least thirty different pseudonyms throughout the 1940s, he carefully concealed the fact that Thomas P. Kelley is in itself a pseudonym. Describing Kelley as "a nice Jewish boy from Rosedale" (2003), Flie explained that Kelley was a young man living with his parents in an area reserved for Canada's wealthy elite. In an effort to preserve his and his parents' respectability, the king of the Canadian pulps concealed his connection with the salacious underworld of Canada's literary culture by constructing a false identity. To illustrate Kelley's double life, Flie related one of the writer's frantic efforts to keep his pulp authorship a secret. In 1941, Kelley posed for the cover of *Daring Detective*. The cover featured Kelley dragging a woman backwards over a sofa as he strangled her with piano wire. On the morning the magazine was released, Kelley

realized that his family, friends, and neighbors might see the magazine and recognize him. To prevent this, Kelley spent the morning dashing around Toronto magazine stores, buying up every copy of the issue he could find, in order to keep his pulp associations a secret.

This scenario draws attention to the tensions in the cultural politics surrounding pulp fiction. Kelley was committing a class transgression by writing for the pulps. Derided as objects marked by moral, cultural, economic, and social inferiority, pulps were the consumer items of those who had neither the money to purchase better items nor the education and taste to appreciate better publications. Kelley, himself a member of the elite class fractions who deemed the pulps cultural trash, risked losing prestige in his community by writing for Valentine. While he might transgress the class border between art and trash, the public knowledge of the transgression would lead to a loss in his cultural capital. That said, the fact that he feared his colleagues would see the magazines suggests that, despite their protestations, the members of educated and cultural elite class fractions were reading pulp magazines. Like *The Smart Set* editors Mencken and Nathan, Kelley and his social equals were playing a duplicitous game of participating in low culture while hypocritically denying their participation in order to protect their claims to cultural and social superiority.

Kelley, of course, was not Canada's only pulp writer, although the archival evidence suggests that Valentine relied on a small stable of writers who published under various pseudonyms and across different genres. The writers C.V. Tench and Daniel Halperin both published in this manner. Tench published detective fiction under his own name as well as the pen-names Ned Ward, Charles Truscott, and Jack Truscott. Manuscripts in the collection show that Toronto's Daniel Halperin wrote detective fiction under the thinly-disguised pen-names Niel Perrin and Phil Perrin. He also published western stories using the pseudonym

Zed Kelley. Both Halperin and Tench had full-time jobs as newspaper journalists. Tench was in fact a crime reporter for the *Vancouver Sun*, while Halperin was a *Toronto Star* reporter. Where Tench allowed his real name to be published in the true crime magazines, along with his credentials as a newspaper crime reporter, Halperin kept his identity a secret. The reasons behind their respective decisions cannot be traced, as the paucity of information in regard to Halperin and Tench is even greater than that relating to Kelley. In this respect, Halperin and Tench are both typical pulp writers: they produced masses of fiction, received little credit for their work, and vanished into oblivion when the pulp magazine industry collapsed in the 1950s.

This collapse began in 1949 when groups such as the National Council of Women of Canada, Parent Teacher Associations, the Imperial Order of the Daughters of Empire, and Kiwanis Clubs of Canada lobbied Members of Parliament to outlaw crime pulps and crime comics. David E. Fulton, Member of Parliament for Kamloops, introduced Bill 10 on 04 October 1949. The bill, which was colloquially referred to as the "Fulton Bill," targeted children's comics that specialized in crime stories. The grounds for the ban centered on morality and the corruption of youth. Fulton argued that criminal stories prompted criminal behavior in children, citing an instance in which a twelve-year-old Montreal boy "beat his mother to death with a bat while she was sleeping and at the trial said he had seen that sort of thing in the comics" (*Hansard* 04 Oct. 1949 514). Rather than considering the complex factors underlying criminal or anti-social behavior, the majority of members of parliament blamed comics as the direct cause of juvenile delinquency. The specifications of the bill, however, stretched beyond comics to include any and all magazines that traded in criminal tales.

In December 1949, an amendment to Section 207 of the Criminal Code, which dealt with obscenity, was put in place. The amendment made it an offence to make, print, publish, distribute, sell, or own "any magazine, periodical or book which exclusively or substantially comprises matter depicting the commission of crimes, real or fictitious" (*Hansard* 5 Dec. 1949 2690). George Flie, who was in high school during the 1950s, recalls campaigns in his community to collect and destroy the pulp magazines and comic books that had recently been deemed criminal objects. The political and social panic over pulp was not, however, the ultimate cause behind the demise of the magazines. The 1950s ushered in the cheap paperback novel. The content of the novels was similar to that of the pulps, but the format offered more fiction at a cheaper price than pulp magazines. Once again, economics proved more powerful than politics as changes in material production and consumer tastes ended the predominance of pulp magazines in the production of popular literature.

On their own, the fragments of information offered by National Library's pulp archive offer intriguing but inconclusive insights into Canadian pulp publishing. In re-constructing the history of Valentine's publishing endeavour, I have combined archival evidence with debates from the house of commons, newspaper clippings, and personal interviews in order to arrive at a complex understanding of this history. The nature of my research not only works to explain the phenomenon of pulp production unto itself, it also traces the relationship between literature, publishing, and the social world. Shaped by economic and political forces, the pulps operated in a dual mode of mass popularity and cultural peripherality. The tensions surrounding such a position were negotiated in every aspect of the magazines' production. The combined aesthetic and economic demands underlying the editorial work, the cultural denigration of pulp authors, and the poor print

quality of the magazines themselves all explain the ways in which the pulps' degraded position on the cultural hierarchy was defined. This understanding of pulp magazines in Canada is, however, an incomplete one. As Robert Darnton's communication circuit makes clear, textual production always takes place in relation to textual reception. Accordingly, the next chapter discusses the reception and readership of Canadian pulp magazines.

Chapter Two

The Offal of the Magazine Trade:

the Reception and Readership of Canadian Pulp Fiction

WHAT DO YOU READ?

It's an important question because the following magazines represent the best reading material on Canadian newsstand today.

STAG UNCANNY TALES DYNAMIC WESTERN DARE-DEVIL DETECTIVE
ROMANTIC LOVE STORIES PERSONAL EXPERIENCES DARING LAFF
DARING CONFESSIONS

Remember the titles! The magazines they represent guarantee you the finest reading on the newsstand market!

--Advertisement for Canadian pulps

> I show you now a publication entitled "Girls on City Streets." Now, I want hon. members to know that I am building up a file on this subject. I purchased this copy in a coffee shop in a small western town. There was only the one coffee shop and newsstand and this publication was sold there. Things appear in this that I would not dare read in this chamber.
>
> --MP E.G. Hansell

> "Middle class: those who are too proud to read pulp magazines for pleasure, but are not important enough to read them for mental relaxation."
>
> --Toronto Daily Star, Humour Column 1935

In her work on pulp readership, Erin Smith re-constructs an imagined community of working-class men who engaged with hard-boiled detective fiction as a means of understanding the social world. By taking up pulp reading with the needs of these readers in mind, Smith provides an interpretation of the fiction's representations of authority, workplace structures, economic disparity, and gender-based social roles. Canadian crime pulps are designed to appeal to this group of readers, yet the advertising and style of stories in the magazines suggest that Valentine targeted female readers as well. Unfortunately, there are no statistics, subscriber lists, or other recorded information on who read Canadian pulps. A consideration of the advertising in the magazines, the ways in which Valentine marketed his own magazines, and the fiction that Valentine chose to publish all suggest that Valentine's imagined community was grounded in the idea and idealization of Canada's nationhood. More often than not, this imagined community painted Canada in a glorious light that may well have buoyed the spirits of readers in the midst of a war. In the first half of this chapter, I review the problems, articulated clearly by Erin Smith, of re-constructing pulp readership. I then piece together the audience to whom Valentine believed his magazines sold by analyzing advertising and the few published letters and editorial comments in the magazines.

In the second half of this chapter, I present an analysis of three pulp stories that reflect the most common themes of Canadian crime stories. Specifically, the stories advocate faith in legal and judicial systems and the maintenance of social stability. Overall, Canada is constructed in manner befitting its motto: it is a nation permeated by peace, order and good government. As such, C.V. Tench's "Amazing Death of the Hay-Hidden Poker Bandits" portrays a Canadian society as a moral society built upon the

ideals of hard work and community, while Brice Disque's "Robbery With Refinement" provides readers with an instance of the stability of the social hierarchy. The third story, Niel Perrin's "Image for Murder," treats Canada as an idyllic space in which a heroic yet ordinary individual helps to bring justice to three murderers. Following these stories, I take up a fourth story, "Edmonton's Maniacal Killer and the Innocent Girl," that functions differently from the first three. I compare the true crime representation of a young woman's murder with its representation in the newspaper in order to consider the impact that escapist storytelling has on the reader in contrast to the impact made by journalistic reporting. These stories, and the promotional tactics used in the magazines, constructed a social identity grounded in nationalism. This national imagining alternately celebrated and resisted the lowly cultural assignation of the pulps and their audience.

As with re-constructing the production of the pulps, one of the central problems with understanding the reception of pulp magazines is the absence of recorded information. We have few details about Canadian pulp readers as an audience and virtually no information from readers about their individual experiences with pulp texts. Records of distribution, subscriber lists, and account books no longer exist to tell us how the pulps circulated after they were published. Similarly, memoirs, letters, and diaries discussing how individuals responded to pulp fiction either do not exist or are not known at this time. Part of this gap in information stems from the economic and educational limitations faced by pulp readers. As Erin Smith explains:

> wealthy people leave all sorts of evidence—diaries, letters, autobiographies, annotated personal libraries—of what they read and how they read it. […] The social position of less privileged readers […] made it unlikely that they would

> leave this kind of evidence. Lacking the education, leisure, and discretionary income necessary to own many books or write at any length about their experiences, such readers left few traces. (16)

In keeping with this problem, pulps did not garner the book reviews, literary awards, and critical discussions that accompanied works of high literature in the 1940s. While the magazines were remarkably prolific and widely circulated—as Member of Parliament David Fulton pointed out, "a study of the magazine stands in any news shop of this city or in any other city across Canada [reveals] how widespread is the distribution of these magazines" (*Hansard* 04 Oct. 1949 512)—they amassed neither personal nor literary commentary on their reception. Valentine, for his part, may not have considered any records he kept on the distribution and sale of his magazines worth preserving. In spite of these obstacles, Smith has demonstrated that it is possible to piece together an idea of the pulp audience and an interpretation of how pulp was read.

In her research, Smith considers letters from readers that were published in the pulps, advertising in the pulps, American literacy studies, and the University of Chicago's Library School's research on the reading habits of labourers in the 1930s. She argues:

> the way these various representations of pulp reading practices coalesce around a common reader is impressive. Overwhelmingly, these sources suggest that pulp fiction was read by white, working-class men who were preoccupied with manliness, finding skilled and remunerative work, and the "impression management" increasingly necessary for social advancement. (Smith 10)

For the Canadian pulps, the political debates over the censorship of pulp magazines provide insight into the perception of the magazines by, quite literally, Canada's ruling class. Given the elitism of this point of view, the debates articulate the derided cultural position from the perspective of the social and politically powerful. On another level, the advertising in Canadian pulp magazines provides insight into Valentine's assessment of his audience's needs and desires. The advertisements suggest that Canadian pulp readers were in search of education as well as entertainment. In terms of entertainment, Valentine promised his readers that he could give them stories that they would find worthy of purchase. A series of letters, replied to in the magazines via editorial comments, demonstrate Valentine's willingness to shape his magazines around reader's desires while making his efforts to satisfy these desires explicit. The letters themselves express a sense of national pride and identity on the part of readers. Playing up this sense of identity, Valentine spoke of his magazines as vehicles for the distribution of fine Canadian literature that readers could be proud of reading.

Running counter to this representation of pulp reading, the 1949 House of Commons debates on banning pulp magazines and crime comics demonstrate an open animosity toward these publications. Decrying crime comics and pulps as the "offal of the magazine trade," Member of Parliament T.H. Goode declared that "no should have to buy it. No one should be able to buy it" (*Hansard* 6 Oct. 1949 583). The majority of politicians agreed with Goode in wanting to prevent Canadians from being able to read these materials. While much of the justification for the ban centered on fears that crime fiction would result in the moral corruption of young readers, arguments against pulp that were grounded in the idea of improving the Canadian citizenry ran parallel to the moral

concerns. Goode summarized these e arguments in one sentence as he lamented that the decision of many Canadians to buy a and "to read this type of magazine is pitiful in a civilized country" (*Hansard* 6 Oct. 1 1949 583). Employing a rhetoric of national civilization and cultivation, the Hou use of Commons agreed that a ban on crime pulps was not an adequate way to counteract th the uncivil society represented by the pulp readership.

In conjunction with the cens sorship of pulp magazines, the government determined that they should promote a better cl lass of literature. Focusing on the creation of a future of civilized readers in a civilized co ountry, Member of Parliament R.R. Knight argued that "there should be a cultivation of tas ste for good literature while people are still young. Let us give our young people better liter erature" (*Hansard* 6 Oct. 1949 585). The political agenda behind pulp censorship was s not merely to rid Canada of pulp magazines, but more importantly to reform Canadian readers; the ban on pulps was a political decision aimed at creating not only morally s sound readers, but cultivated citizens. In this way, the ruling class of Canadian society sou ught to raise up the working-class pulp readers mentally and morally while leaving s their relative economic and political powerlessness unchanged. Indeed, the very fact th hat pulp magazines could be removed from their primary reading public was a sign o of that public's powerlessness. In 1949, Canadian pulp readers were at the centre of a deba ate that derided not only pulp magazines, but the intelligence and character of the rea aders themselves.

The advertising, letters, and l editorial comments in Valentine's pulps clearly resist this demeaning assessment of pulp readers. Some of the advertising, for example, appealed to the reader's power to be etter him or herself according to the standards alluded to in the House of Commons debates; contrarily, others advertisements openly celebrated

the enjoyment to be had by reading trashy and escapist literature. As Clive Bloom notes in *Cult Fiction*, "pulp is both a desire for respectability and refusal" (12) of it. The negotiation readers made between these two poles, respectability and the refusal of it, play out in the magazines' advertisements. Cautioning against assuming a direct correlation between advertising and readers' needs, Erin Smith points out that "we do not know whether audiences shared or adopted the attitudes put forth in advertisements" (45). That said, Smith concludes that "it was in the financial interest of advertisers to make appeals that culminated in a purchase" (45). In this way, advertisements that appeared in the magazines over a sustained period of time suggest that the products on offer did, in fact, appeal to the needs of readers. In turn, and understanding of these needs can explain the economic and cultural position of Canadian pulp readers.

Advertisements for the "Alexander Sales Company" and the "Modern Book Mart" were by far the most prevalent and longest-running ads in Valentine's pulps. Almost every pulp magazine featured a full-page ad for one, if not both, of these companies. Throughout the 1940s, both companies offered hundreds of novels and reference books to readers at prices between one and three dollars. Of these books, the novels both mirrored and expanded upon the fiction selections presented in the pulps. For example, a half-page ad for the racy novel *Sister of the Road* promised readers a "frank, uncensored story of a wandering woman in the underworld" (32). Similarly, *Prison Days and Nights* and *Life and Death in Sing Sing* (2) featured true crime stories like the ones printed by Valentine. These particular novels offered the vicarious experience of life among hard-core criminals facing life-long imprisonment or death. *Written on the Wind* was another novel to merit a half-page ad; it told "a real, bold story

of the modern idle rich and of their frantic search for life—new thrills—new pleasures—new loves—new debaucheries" (27). Marketed through their lurid appeal and their cross-class boundary crossing, advertisements for these books appeared across various magazine titles throughout the 1940s in a manner that suggested their popularity.

The sensational and voyeuristic appeal of these novels celebrated these qualities in fiction as both desirable and enjoyable. Indeed, the advertisements suggest that a certain enjoyment was derived directly from the act of purchasing and reading books that resisted conventional morality and the dictates of high literary tastes. As an ad for *The Playboy's Handbook* proclaimed, such reading materials were "not for goody-goods, but good for others" (51). At the same time, the novels that Valentine advertised offered fictitious portrayals of how vastly different groups in society functioned. Notably, these groups ranged from the lowest social classes—prostitutes and prisoners—to the highest classes of the "idle rich." The reference to debauchery at work in both extremes of the social spectrum may have appealed to readers by suggesting that, despite the distinctions of money and power, the members of all classes were the same on a moral level. Overall, both the books and the advertisements challenged the social divisions that upheld the tastes and morality of the elite classes as superior to those of other classes.

The reference books advertised by the Alexander Sales Company and the Modern Book Mart were less likely to contest received ideas about class, literature, and morality. Instead, they focused on providing readers with practical assistance in managing their everyday affairs. As Loo and Strange point out, "books advertised in the pulps offered hard-to-acquire information on hushed-up topics" (18). This information included advice on birth control, sexual relationships, and marriage offered through books like Margaret

Sanger's *Love and Marriage* and Marie Stope's *Married Love*. The topics covered by the reference books could also be very mundane. Advertisements for books like *The Law of Landlord and Tenant in Ontario* and *The Laws of Banks and Banking in Canada* (50) were common, as were guide books to healthy lifestyles like *The Secret of Keeping Fit* and *The Science of Eating* (2). The presence of these titles suggests the limited educational backgrounds of many pulp readers as well as the financial pressures they faced in dealing with landlords and banks. While Erin Smith points out that the advertising in the magazine *Black Mask* was directed at male "readers who were preoccupied with autonomy and manliness" (13), thereby marking a gender division in the assumed readership of pulp magazines, Valentine's advertising presents no such division. Both men and women were addressed in the advertisements. Moreover, both sexes were seen as sharing common concerns grounded in their social position. Educationally and economically constrained, pulp magazines gave both male and female readers more than fiction that resisted the cultural hierarchy: the magazines offered help in negotiating the problems posed by their position in the social and economic hierarchy.

While the advertisements for books addressed the common concerns of pulp readers, thereby structuring these readers as part of a particular social group, Valentine himself employed Canadian identity and national pride as a means of presenting pulp readers as unified and important community. Between the sensational covers of his magazines, he printed letters from readers, editorial comments, and war-time rhetoric that set up the pulps as a not only a socially legitimate reading practice, but also a way of patriotically participating in Canadian society. Ads promoting Valentine's other magazine titles were by far the most prevalent ads. These ads stressed their Canadian

content as a reason to support the periodicals. An ad for *Dare-Devil Detective Stories*, for example, appeared consistently across Valentine's fiction titles. It stated, in bold letters, that "each issue [is] packed with the best stories that Canada's authors of detective fiction can produce. Get your copy today!" (92). Similar ads for his science fiction, romance, western, and family stories also appeared in most issues that he produced. In addition to encouraging people to support Canadian writers, Valentine assured readers that his magazines fulfilled their war-time duty of supporting the Canadian economy. A blurb in *True Gangster Crime Cases*, for example, explains that "*True Gangster Crime Cases* is edited and printed in Canada by Trade Union Workmen on Canadian paper" (2). This statement, and others like it, appear at the bottom of the table of contents across many different issues of the magazines. Alternately, blurbs encouraging Canadian writers to submit their stories to the editors appeared. These blurbs were used after the end of the war, most likely in an attempt to create a readership based on Canadian loyalty in the face of the new influx of American imports. Overall, the self-promotion within the Canadian pulps presented the magazines as sites of nationalism. On the level of production, the magazines supported the labour of Canadian workers, the pulp and paper industry, and Canadian authors. The audience, in turn, could support all of these things by buying the magazines. To put it simply, supporting the Canadian pulps meant supporting Canada.

Valentine's advertising strategies set up his magazines as part of a community of Canadian workers, editors, writers, and readers. In this community, readers were the most important element because the magazines were designed to meet their interests and needs; as the editors point out, the magazines offer "a variety of stories to meet each

individual taste. Drop us a line and let us know what you want. We'll dish it up!" (94). *Yarns*, Valentine's only family-oriented pulp, printed a mixture of Canadian small-town sports stories, innocent romantic tales set in Canadian towns, and adventure stories featuring heroic RCMP officers. Perhaps because it was geared to a wider range of readers than the crime fiction pulps, *Yarns* promoted its Canadian content and its devotion to meeting the needs of readers with greater vigour than some of the other magazines. As a blurb on the inside cover of the August 1941 issue explains:

> the editorial policy of *Yarns* since its inception has been: to introduce to Canadian readers as many good Canadian writers as can be discovered. We believe time will prove this policy a wise one. It will give your magazine a freshness and zip that is often found wanting in those that refuse to respond to the knock of the newcomer. (1)

Describing *Yarns* as "your magazine," Valentine made his publication into the symbolic property of his reading community. Another blurb on the facing page built on this idea. It stated that since the magazine's inception, readers had "responded warmly to the efforts of the editorial staff. You have praised and you have criticized. Everything has helped. Your criticisms have caused us to endeavour the harder to bring you better stories, finer illustrations, and the best covers" (2). By presenting the editors as intermediaries between readers and writers, the magazines themselves were constructed as sites of exchange between cultural producers and cultural consumers. As a whole, this cultural trading was treated as act of nation-building: readers from all over the Dominion were connected to previously unknown Canadian authors that the editors made public.

According to the promotional blurbs, readers consistently communicated their opinions with the editorial staff. Valentine rarely printed these letters, but the ones that do appear in the magazines are carefully structured around the themes of Canadian identity and reader satisfaction. One selection of these letters appears in the August 1941 issue of *Yarns* while another ran in the July 1941 issue of *Dare-Devil Detective Stories*. The letters in Yarns applaud Valentine's declarations of Canadian content and community. Frances Gerton of Winnipeg wrote to say that she thought the policy of discovering Canadian writers was "fair and right" because "Canadian writers should be given fair hearing. They are every bit as good as the writers in other countries" (93). A letter from Bernard Cramner of Montreal expressed the feeling that "all the readers of *Yarns* appreciate your effort in trying to bring Canadian writers before the reading public" (94). In a slightly different vein, readers of *Dare-Devil Detective Stories* wrote to request even more Canadian fiction than they were being offered in 1941. For example, W.R. Smith of Montreal asks "couldn't we have more stories with a purely Canadian background? Don't misunderstand me, I like your magazine a lot, but it seems to me that a magazine printed in Canada for Canadian readers should build their stories and characters around purely local scenes. What do you think?" (94). Ever ready to present themselves as obliging editors, a note printed beneath the letters asks "Well, readers, what do you think? Write in and let us know if you agree" (94). These kinds of requests were, as Erin Smith points out, an aspect of successful marketing. As she explains, "pulp editors were masters of market research. [...] Almost every pulp had columns of reader letters, ran periodic surveys of readers, or included mail-in coupons on which a reader could rank his or her favourite stories" (52). Such research was always couched in

friendly terms, effacing the fact that publishing companies were engaged in creating a profitable product by disguising their marketing as a form of communal discussion.

In keeping with this, the letters that appeared in the magazines served as free advertising blurbs. A criticism, such as that presented in W.R. Smith's letter, was almost invariably followed by an editorial reply focused on shaping the magazine to meet readers' wishes. More often than not, the letters chosen for publication praised the fiction in the magazines. For example, one reader described his enjoyment of the "dangerous adventures [and] fine characters" (Gordon 94) portrayed while another reader notes that the fiction was "well-written, excitingly told" (Nedskoff 95). Valentine publicized not only the appeal of his magazines, but also the nature of the pulp audience. The letters showcase straight-forward readers in search of well-written yet adventurous fiction. These readers and their preferences, the published letters suggest, spanned the country. People writing from cities such as Montreal, Vancouver, and Winnipeg are represented alongside small towns like Moosejaw and Medicine Hat. In this way, Valentine gave his magazine a nation-wide vogue.

Such an audience may well have been a fiction unto itself. American editors like *Black Mask's* Joseph T. Shaw or the multi-magazine editor Harold B. Hersey frequently wrote fraudulent letters to publish as promotional pieces (Smith 9, Hersey 87). Valentine and his co-editors may have been writing the letters themselves, a supposition that cannot be substantiated by the existing archival evidence. Whether the editors wrote the letters themselves or published a selection of letters that they had received, the presentation of the letters had the same effect. They situated the Canadian pulps as an important national phenomenon and treated Canadian readers as individuals participating as a community

participating not so much in lurid, voyeuristic reading practices as they were in building of a national culture.

This idea of a nation based on shared literature and reading tastes necessarily glosses over the inequalities and cultural differences between the different class fractions of Canadian society. Valentine's marketing strategies created an appearance of unity. Such an appearance was desirable because it suggested to readers that pulp magazines were both popular and legitimate reading materials, thereby encouraging their continued mass circulation while angling for a more secure position in the cultural hierarchy. In other words, the idea of unity worked to combat the stigma of the pulps by portraying pulp reading as a national pastime in which all the citizens of Canada could engage without shame. Benedict Anderson has explored the relationship between national literatures and the sense of belonging and unity that underpins nationhood. In *Imagined Communities*, he notes that the nation "is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (6). Printed mass-media were an important part of creating this image of communion.

As Anderson goes on to explain, national newspapers formed part of the foundation for national consciousnesses. Identical copies of newspapers could be mass-produced and distributed daily across the nation's various geographic spaces. Their ubiquity and their widespread circulation created a feeling of shared identity among readers. According to Anderson, "the newspaper reader, observing exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbours, is continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life"(35). As

ubiquitous, everyday objects, the Canadian pulps functioned in a manner similar to that of the newspapers. The pulps were mass-produced, distributed nation-wide, and read on trains and barbershops in a way that reified the imagined identity of the nation and its subjects. According to Martin Lyons, this "mass production of cheap popular fiction integrated new readers into national reading publics, and helped to make those reading publics more homogenous and unified" (341). Building on this mass circulation in society, the internal texts of pulp advertisements, letters, and editorial comments addressed readers as if they were all of the same background and possessed the same needs. In these ways, pulp magazines were a printed place of community that appealed to readers by creating a feeling of comradeship.

Contradicting the idea of a unified community of readers was the pulp audience itself. Consisting primarily of English-speaking men and women from the working classes, pulp readers were an underclass lacking in economic and political power. The disparities between different economic classes of readers in Canada was glossed over in Valentine's pulps in favour of presenting a universalized ideal of Canadian literature. At the same time, the pulp audience was narrowly defined as a group white anglophones from the labouring classes; other class fractions, non-white ethnic groups, and non-English speaking readers were all excluded in the magazines' self-representation as sites of inclusion and equality. This process of ignoring the diverse and often divided fractions of society is fundamental to the idea of the nation. Anderson argues that a nation is imagined "as a community because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (Anderson 7). As products designed to appeal to the popular imagination,

the promotional rhetoric of the pulps ignored readers who fell outside the category of white Anglo-Canadian. At the same time, this rhetoric showed pulp readers to themselves as a homogenous group that was an essential and equal part of the Canadian reading public.

Further relying on nationalism to promote his pulps, Valentine advertised pulp magazine reading as a morale-booster for soldiers defending their country. One of the most prevalent ads to appear across his magazines titles during the war hailed individuals in this manner:

> DON'T THROW THIS MAGAZINE AWAY! The boys in uniform will enjoy reading these magazines you have lying around the house. When you have finished reading them make sure that they are turned over to a responsible organization for distribution to the men in our armed forces—it's just another small way in which you can help do your bit. (96)

Not only did this advertisement encourage readers to feel that they were good citizens, it also promoted the circulation of pulp reading matter as an important contribution to the war effort. Where purchasing a pulp magazine was a socially significant act because it supported Canada's emerging writers and boosted the Canadian economy, keeping that magazine in circulation was an ethical and patriotic practice. Pulp readers were therefore interpellated as direct contributors to the success of the war and the defence of the nation. Taken as a whole, Valentine's promotional strategies merged Canadian nationalism with pulp reading practices in a manner that argued against the typical moral and aesthetic derision directed towards the pulps. Challenging this derision, he marketed his magazines as both nationally and socially important.

The fiction itself conveyed social and national meanings that paralleled the national pride asserted in the letters, editorial comments, and advertisements that Valentine printed. In their work on the true crime magazines, Loo and Strange observe that "the central message of true crime was not only respectful but morally conservative. Despite the sexually suggestive and violent cover imagery and the sensational advertisements dispersed throughout each issue, the stories could be fairly described as crime fables: secular accounts of Christianity's deadly sins" (14). Tracing a number of stories in which the sins of greed, lust, and envy lead to murder, Loo and Strange point out that the RCMP and the legal system consistently triumph over crime; accordingly, criminals are removed from society in order to maintain a safe, just, and law-abiding country. Further to this, true crime magazines suggest that crime does not take place in the civilized regions of Canada. Rather, it is restricted to isolated incidents in isolated locations. Arctic adventures and stories of the wild west (Alberta and Saskatchewan) abound while places like Toronto and Montreal are never mentioned. Criminal activity is also the result of lawless, debauched individuals rather than organized crime rings so often featured in American crime pulps.[3] Ironically, the Members of Parliament who agreed to ban pulps because of their immoral and sometimes lascivious content failed to recognized that, on the whole, Valentine's crime magazines represented Canada as a nation of peace, order, and good government to their readers.

The fictitious crime stories followed patterns similar to those of the true crime tales. While the fiction stories feature urban settings rather than isolated locations, these cities are never explicitly identified as Canadian. In some cases, the cities are named as large American cities (Chicago, New York, and San Francisco were popular choices), but

more often than not the cities remain nameless. Relying on generic urban centres, the crime fiction in Valentine's pulps denied the possibility that criminal activity was taking place in modern, industrial areas of Canada. In keeping with the true crime stories, Canadian pulp fiction also presented its readers with a crime-does-not-pay rhetoric. Time and again, criminals are apprehended through a combination of ingenuity and relentless investigation on the part of law enforcement officers. The streets may be mean, the pulp stories seem to say, but the average person is still kept safe by the constant vigilance of the state's legal system.

C.V. Tench's piece "Amazing Death of the Hay-Hidden Poker Bandits" provides a typical example of the way in which pulp fiction portrayed morality, community, and crime control in Canada. The story begins on the night of 22 September 1939. Four thieves burst into the cabin of a lumberjack camp in an isolated region of Saskatchewan. Having just been paid for months of labour, the lumberjacks are indulging in a game of poker. Two of the thieves hold the workers at gun point while the other two thieves take the gambling money and search the rest of the cabin for cash. As soon as the bandits escape, the victims decide to contact the police. They pile into a truck and drive twenty-eight miles to the nearest police station. Located in Roscoe, the police station proves to be empty because Roscoe's sole police officer is absent. The lumberjacks resort to sending a radio message across another two-hundred miles to the police in Prince Albert. While the police do not appear to be an effective, or even available, force in Saskatchewan society at this point, the problem is soon resolved. Despite the great distance between the police and the working men, an officer arrives as soon as he learns that he is needed. Constable Dunn travels sixty miles to the camp the night of the robbery

to find that workers who were staying in cabins that have not been robbed have banded together with the victims. Dunn immediately begins to work with the men by organizing a search for the thieves.

Within two days, a contingent of RCMP officers arrive to assist Dunn and the lumberjacks. The group tracks down and confronts the thieves in a house that the thieves have overtaken. Two of the thieves are caught, but the other two criminals escape. The police question the captured pair and learn that their partners' names are Tony Marino and Joe. The captured men reveal that Tony and Joe have vowed to die rather than be arrested. As Tony Marino had been involved in previous hold-ups and shootings, "the authorities authorized his capture dead or alive" (50). The search party of lumberjacks and law enforcement officers continue to conduct a four-day long "manhunt" that ends with the discovery of Tony and Joe running through a farmer's field. Realizing that they cannot escape, the thieves take cover in a large stack of hay and shoot at their pursuers in order to keep them at a distance. After a day-long stand-off, the police light fire to the haystack. Ostensibly, the fire is nothing more than an attempt to smoke the men out and arrest them, but Tony and Joe suffocate from the smoke. The two men who have been captured are eventually sentenced to ten-year jail sentences and the stolen money is returned to the lumberjacks.

Underlying this chase-and-race tale is a very simple moral: hard work and honesty triumph over laziness and crime. Tony and his gang attempt to get something for nothing by stealing money from those who have earned it. Their attempt to circumvent working for a living leads to the imprisonment of two gang members and the death of the other two. The labourers, for their part, respond to the theft by working alongside the police to

get their money back. As Tench points out, "combing heavy timber in search of desperate gunmen is a nerve-straining job [...], but so enraged were the lumberjacks at the loss of their hard-earned money that they ignored the hard travelling and the danger, pressing steadily on" (49). Building on this distinction between the workers and the thieves, laziness and indolence prove to be the downfall of the gang. The first two thieves are captured while the criminal gang rests over a large meal of stolen food. While Tony and Joe escape, the labourers and the police are able to catch up to them because of their tireless effort. In Tench's words, "the hunters spent another four days tramping through timber, brush and sloughs, over a country where travelling is the hardest" (50). Upon discovering the criminals, the police and the workers have yet one more arduous task to complete: surrounding and capturing the criminals as they hide in a haystack. The working men triumph over the criminal and are rewarded for their efforts by the return of their money.

A sense of community, equality, and co-operation are also key elements of the working men's success. Not only do the lumberjacks (both those who have been robbed and those who have not been robbed) band together to resolve the crime, these men also work alongside police officers as equals. Social divisions related to profession do not exist in this story. Rather, a community of ethical, like-minded citizens co-operate in order to subdue a group of individuals who threaten the stability and quality of life at the lumberjack camp. This representation reflects what Northrop Frye names a "garrison mentality" that figures in "the way in which the Canadian imagination has developed in its literature" (73). According to Frye, Canadian literature is structured around the following imagery and concerns:

> small and isolated communities surrounded with a physical or psychological "frontier," separated from one another and from their American and British colonial sources: communities that provide all that their members have in the way of distinctively human values, and that are compelled to feel a great respect for the law and order that holds them together, yet confronted with a huge, unthinking, menacing, and forbidding physical setting—such communities are bound to develop what we may provisionally call a garrison mentality. (73)

In Tench's account of such a community, he conveys the message that the legal system functions best when it works in concert with members of the community; personal agency is advocated as a means of maintaining a social system that appears to be beneficial to all except those who violate the fundamental principles of honesty, hard work, and community. The criminals, for their part, are removed from this community so that the peace and order endemic to survival in a remote region can be maintained effectively.

In its representation of law and order, "Amazing Death of the Hay-Hidden Poker Bandits" is also an example of true crime's tendency to suggest that crime and disorder are not a part of modern, urban Canadian society. Special attention is paid to the isolation of the lumberjack camp: it is twenty-eight miles from the nearest town and this town is so small that it only has one police officer. Arrangements must be made to send additional officers from Prince Rupert, which is over two hundred miles from the camp. This isolation is in keeping with the majority of true crime tales. The presence of the police in response to any problem is also a common trope in true crime. Regardless of the distance between the lumberjack camp and the nearest police stations, law

enforcement officers arrive on the scene almost immediately. In this way, Tench's story, along with numerous other stories, represented Canadian society as fundamentally connected through social networks capable of maintaining order.

The fiction of Canadian crime pulps also showed that the peace and order of Canadian society relied on the maintenance of economic and social boundaries. "Robbery With Refinement" by Brice Disque Jr., for example, argues in favour of the stability to the social hierarchy. The story details the crimes of Arthur Barry, a notorious jewel thief. Introduced as "a man of breeding and education. His manners were polished, his dress was correct, and his speech was fluent" (78), the story's narrator outlines Barry's use of self-presentation to associate with the most elite circles of Boston. The image that Barry projects is fraudulent, as he is in fact professional working man. The only connection between Barry's working life and his social life lies in the fact that he supported his opulent lifestyle with embezzled funds from the investment firm for which he works. When Barry's employer discovers his crimes and fires him, Barry declares that "only fools worked, and that he was through keeping office hours" (79). In need of money, and in contempt of the demands of working for a normal income, Barry decides to become a high-class jewellery thief. He proves to be a successful and daring thief, his exploits often making headlines in the Boston newspapers and his wealth in stolen jewellery adding up to one and a half millions dollars in just a few years. Living up to his image, Barry shows off his stolen wealth to anyone and everyone. Such pride in this respect is his downfall. Barry's ostentation draws attention to itself, aiding the police in finding and capturing him. Disque concludes the story with a moral lesson: "Arthur Barry, who

had thought the hard way was the easy way, is now serving a prison sentence of thirty-two years" (83).

Like "Amazing Death of the Hay-Hidden Poker Bandits," Disque's fiction advocates the value of a work ethic, but this work ethic is situated within a more complex social context than Tench's remote logging camp. Set in Boston and New York, the story perpetuates the denial that crime might take place in urban Canada that is typical of most Canadian pulp fiction. That said, the world portrayed in the story has much in common with the social world of Canadian readers. In its narrative, the story critiques this world on two levels. First, Barry's social activities suggests that apparent distance between elite society and the classes beneath it can be bridged by the conscious performance of an elite social role. Second, Barry's criminal activities cause the social hierarchies of Boston and New York to become inverted. While the class structure recovers from the disruptions that Barry causes, the story nonetheless presents readers with a mocking portrayal of the vagaries of the upper classes that may have been appealing to readers from disempowered class fractions. That said, the story is ultimately conservative in its support of the existing social and economic hierarchy.

Barry's interactions with the elite strata of society posit the idea that obtaining an elite class position is grounded in a successful social performance. Erin Smith observes that hard-boiled detective fiction taught its readers lessons in "impression management" (7) by showing them the ways in which "careers and social reputations were made by one's appearance—clothing, manners, and visible consumer choices" (Smith 64). "Robbery with Refinement" portrays Barry's ability to fit into the upper classes by convincingly emulating their speech and manners along with his choices in clothing,

housing, and party arrangements. As a successful impostor, Barry has access to the inner working of the lives of the rich. He is able to track their social engagements through the newspaper's society column. He supplements this knowledge with his personal knowledge of his victims life-styles, friends, and homes. At one point, Barry even persuades one of his victim-friends to show him an appraisal list for some diamonds. With his insider's knowledge and his ability to imitate elite class behaviour, Barry becomes a successful gentleman and a successful criminal all at once. He is a figure in which the criminal class and the elite class of society merge to make the subversive suggestion that there is little difference between a wealthy capitalist and a wealthy criminal.

Early in the story, the similarity between Barry and the capitalists he robs is suggested through Barry's refusal to work. His desire for a life of leisure, a life that he initially achieves by embezzling funds, connects him to the leisured classes who do not have to work because they live off the labour of others. Indeed, the funds that Barry has embezzled are from investments made by capitalists whose lives Barry wishes to emulate. Barry, in effect, exploits the rich so that he can enjoy their life-style rather than continue to work for them. After losing his job, Barry continues this exploitation by stealing from the wealthy in a Robin Hood-like manner, but instead of giving his profits to the poor he spends most of the million and a half dollars he makes from stolen jewels on lavish parties to impress wealthy guests. Ironically, his party guests often include the very people he has robbed. While the wealthy class of people fail to detect Barry's deceit, the police do not.

Barry is arrested because he overplays his self-created role. He consistently gives in to the temptation to "show people that he could do things a little better than they could, that he, Barry was the superior man" (80). In this way, his performance as a gentleman is flawed. He displays his money and personal flare to an excess that makes his exercise of impression management a failure. The police capture him after he commits the faux-pas of over-tipping a news vendor one morning while the police, who suspect he is the notorious "gentleman thief," are watching him. Upon questioning the news vendor, the police learn Barry's whereabouts and arrest him. When Barry asks how they managed to identify him, the police explain that they "had [their] ears peeled for gossip, for braggarts—and for show-offs" (83). In this way, the police are represented as the upholders of the existing social order. Where the elite class cannot protect their own interests, the police intervene and exercise their superior skills at reading class behaviour and thereby maintaining class differences. As a part of this stable structure, Barry is sentenced to "twenty-five years of hard labour" (81); the wealthy continue to enjoy their leisured lifestyle. While "Robbery with Refinement" explores class distinctions and presents a character who undermines the existing social hierarchy, the story ultimately communicates the conservative moral that individuals should work for an honest living and avoid transgressing class boundaries.

Niel Perrin's two-part story "Image for Murder" appeared in the December 1942 and February 1942 issues of *World-Wide Detective*. The story coincides with the pulps' presentation of national identity in that the idyllic Canadian landscape and the ability of the average Canadian to improve the society are the central focus of Perrin's story. In its representation of landscape, Perrin is less harsh than either Tench's story or Frye's

interpretation of such stories. Rather, the isolated north becomes a place "where you go to renew life" (Atwood 9). Pristine and daunting at the same time, the setting Perrin employs, a remote and elitist resort at Cloud Lake in northern Manitoba, contributes to the capture and expulsion of some British criminals who might otherwise sully an essentially moral population of Canadian citizens. As such, the landscape is a factor in the perpetual renewal of peace, order, and good government as the essential Canadian values. A murder mystery, the story features an ordinary Canadian man named Kent Fain. Fain falls in with Caroline Peters, a professional criminal from England while he is looking for work in New York. Fain agrees to a strange job that involves posing as Peters' husband for a summer. Peters refuses to offer an explanation for the ruse and offers Kent a large sum of money ($150 a week) to accept the offer without questioning her further. Fain agrees under the pretense of wanting the money, but in actual fact he accepts the offer because he senses that Nanette, a frightened-looking young woman who Peters introduces as her daughter, needs his help.

Kent, Nanette, and Caroline leave New York for the isolated location of Cloud Lake in northern Manitoba. There is an exclusive resort at this lake and Caroline, who appears to be a wealthy socialite, wishes to spend the summer there dancing and yachting. Over the course of the summer, Kent discovers that Caroline, along with her real husband (George Peters), and her sister (Sybil Compton), are plotting to murder Sibyl's husband. In fact, Sybil has married the wealthy retired banker Robert J. Compton with the sole intent of killing him and inheriting his money. Caroline, Sybil, and George have committed this kind of crime before: George is wanted for murder in London. Fain proves unable to do anything to prevent the plot on his own, but he learns that an

undercover Scotland Yard detective by the name of George Waldron has followed the criminals to Cloud Lake. Fain gives Waldron information about the trio's plans to murder Compton, and Waldron manages to save the lives of both Fain and Compton, kill George Peters in self-defense, and arrest Caroline and Sybil. At the end of the story, Caroline and Sybil are returned to England to serve jail sentences. As a final touch, Fain marries Nanette.

Perrin's story clearly represents Canada as a safe, moral, and crime-free space. The criminals themselves are British and the hapless protagonist becomes mixed up with Caroline in New York. All of the criminals—Caroline, George, and Sybil—enter the country from elsewhere and it is this entry into Canada that leads to their downfall. Waldron tells Kent that he picked up Caroline's trail in New York, but he explains that he could not track the three killers down until they moved to the remote location of Cloud Lake. While Caroline chose an isolated location in Manitoba in order to provide herself and her co-conspirators with a cover from the police, it only exposes them to surveillance and capture. At the resort, Waldron is able to pose as a guest while watching Caroline and Sibyl's every move. The resort itself aids in the arrest of the murderers. Located on an island surrounded by an ice-cold lake that is thirty miles long, Caroline and Sybil have nowhere to go after Waldron kills George Peters and sets out to arrest them. Both women are subsequently removed from Canada when they are sent back to Britain to stand trial. "Image for Murder" thereby constructs a space of pristine perfection that signifies Canada is nation that will not tolerate criminal activity.

Central to the prevention of crime is Kent Fain. Incorruptible and heroic, Fain is simultaneously an ordinary Canadian man. He is so ordinary, in fact, that he has no idea

what to do when he learns that he is entangled in a murder plot. While Waldron ultimately saves Fain's life and arrests the conspirators, Fain remains the hero of the story through his assistance to Waldron. By providing the Scotland Yard officer with the information that he needed to apprehend the criminals, and putting his own life in danger, Fain is presented as an unwitting but courageous and forthright hero. His status as a ordinary citizen suggests the power of the average individual to assist in maintaining order in Canadian society. Fain's reward for his moral certitude is his marriage to Nanette, who is not Caroline's daughter but her half-sister. Caroline threatened to kill Nanette if she did not go along with the murder plot, so Nanette was in need of rescuing at the beginning of the story. Her marriage to Fain is not only the hero's reward, it is also a symbol of continued peace, community, and morality in the Dominion of Canada.

Disrupting such representations of the nation, Valentine also printed horrific true crime tales that took place in Canada during the 1940s. "Edmonton's Maniacal Killer and the Innocent Girl," which appeared in a 1942 issue of *Factual Detective Cases*, is a striking example. The story relates the brutal stabbing of fifteen-year old Dorothy Hammond as she was walking home from a show on 15 November 1941. Stabbed ten times by an unknown assailant, Hammond died within an hour of the attack. The police launched an investigation that lead to Chester Johnston, a young man who had previously been institutionalized for violent tendencies. Johnston confessed to the crime and was subsequently convicted and sentenced to death by hanging. The pulp account of the murder graphically describes the crime itself with the graphic and voyeuristic words:

> Out of the night Death struck! Once … twice … thrice … ten times, the razor-edged hunting knife drove down to the hilt—Dorothy Hammond, fifteen-year old

> Edmonton schoolgirl, lay in the gutter mortally wounded. Blood gushed from her face and chest. Her gashed hands, that had tried so desperately to ward off the fiendish blows, groped for a hold. Dorothy staggered to her feet, stumbled to a nearby tree, then slid slowly down to the snowy ground. (23)

With its focus on violence, blood, and the gutter, Hammond's significance as a human being is ignored in favour of presenting lurid details of the crime. Following this opening, the story goes on to summarize the details of the police investigation that leads to the murderer's arrest, trial and execution. Compressed into six eight-by-ten inch pulp pages, the true crime version of the crime appeared six months after the murder took place. Most of the information, and all of the accompanying photographs were lifted from the *Edmonton Journal*'s front-page articles on the murder. This transition from newspaper article to pulp magazine story radically alters the way in which readers are affected by the recounting of the crime.

First of all, the appearance of the murder story in the newspaper places it in the context of war-time events. In contrast, the magazine's presentation of the story isolates it from these events, placing it instead in the context of other, often licentious, criminal tales. In November 1941, the time at which Hammond was killed, the *Edmonton Journal* typically featured nothing but war coverage in its first several pages. Only a terrible event like Hammond's murder, which took place in the centre of Edmonton, can steal the front page from reports of world-wide conflict. That said, the story of her murder still shares the front page with headlines such as "Berlin Claims Kerch Capture" and "Canuck Troops in Hong Kong." The key difference between the journal's account of the murder and its reports on the war lies in the individuality given to Hammond's death. The war

stories on the front page of the *Edmonton Journal* do not provide details of events, nor does war reporting deal with any one person in particular. In contrast, the headlines that announce Hammond's murder read "Fiendish Slayer Stabs Girl, 15, to Death" and "Dorothy Hammond Dies With 10 Knife Wounds" (A1). The subtitle of the latter headline read "Victim's Hands Badly Cut as She Tried to Avoid Ghastly Death" (A1) and the description of the event itself reads:

> Her chest and throat pierced deeply 10 times by a hunting knife with a four-inch blade, Dorothy Hammond, 15, blonde, grade seven schoolgirl, choir singer and speed skater, died in hospital Saturday at 10:00 p.m., 61 minutes after she had been set upon by a fiendish slayer. (A1)

The headlines and the lead paragraph provide readers with information that reminds the reader of Hammond's humanity and her activities within her community. Not only is the account of her death individualized, it is also concerned with her identity in a manner that, unlike the pulp story, does not reduce her to a mangled body and resists sensationalizing her suffering.

The newspaper articles that frame Hammond's murder are the opposite of individual and commmunity-oriented. The headline"Canuck Troops in Hong Kong," for example, gives only an idea of anonymous "Canucks" standing in place of individuals. Similarly, the headline "Berlin Claims Kerch Capture" makes the city of Berlin its subject rather than a human being. The capture of Kerch is not described, thereby effacing any bloody struggles that took place during the capture in favour of telling us only of the outcome. Thematically, the murder and the war parallel one another: violence, fear, and a rupture in social order underpin both war reports and murder stories.

That said, Hammond's murder is personalized; her death is presented to readers as the tragedy of her family and community while the tragedies of the war are kept generic and distant.

While newspapers across Canada, along with magazines like *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night*, were awash with news of the war, pulp magazines carried out their role as purveyors of escapism by ignoring war-time concerns. None of Valentine's magazines included articles or stories that deal with the second world war. The magazine in which "Edmonton's Maniacal Killer and the Innocent Girl" appeared is no exception. Unlike the newspaper's presentation of the story, the true crime version of the murder is not leading, urgent news. In fact, nothing sets it apart as a particularly important story. Its title is not mentioned on the front cover. It is not a lengthy feature story. Instead, it is shortened from several newspaper columns to a few pages. These pages are sandwiched between stories of other murders as well as kidnappings, crime rings, and bank robberies. This context undermines the brutality of Hammond's death: set against a background of other criminal tales, Hammond's murder is altered from a horrific event to a form of voyeuristic entertainment. The titles of the stories that do appear on the magazine's cover include "Red Lust" and "The Winnipeg Diamond Mystery." These titles carry implications of lasciviousness and material greed that taint the reception of Hammond's death. Playing up the difference between Hammond's murder and other crimes published in the magazine, Dorothy is labeled an "innocent girl" in the title of the story. As such, her death is heightened into dramatic pathos within a prevailing context of sin and debauchery. Positioned in this way, her dignity as a human being is undercut and the actuality of her death is effaced in favour of making her into an object of escapism.

In terms of narrative style, the newspaper presents different points of view: police outline their investigation, the principal of Dorothy's school describes her personality and expresses the loss felt by the school, the Hammonds' neighbors express their sympathy for the family. When Johnston is arrested, a description of the arrest and the killer's confession runs beside an interview with Johnston's shocked grandfather. The newspaper story is therefore fragmented and polyvocal in an effort to present a more comprehensive narrative. The newspaper negotiates the combined purposes of presenting objective information and eliciting strong emotional reactions. In regard to information, facts drive the newspaper story. The exact time and location of the murder is given and precise statements from neighbors, police investigators, nurses are provided along with the names (and sometimes addresses) of the individuals quoted. In conjunction with this, the newspaper articles have an immediacy that stems from story unfolding on a day-to-day basis without knowledge of how the case will be resolved. To put it another way, the telling of events comes close on the heels of the events themselves and each segment of the story lacks closure: neither reader nor writer knows how the murder investigation will end.

A strong emotional reaction is provoked by this immediacy. The reader is meant to feel sympathy for Dorothy and her family, to take pride in Edmonton's law enforcement officers, and to experience fear and anxiety over the dangers of urban life. Where the pulp magazines typically displace crime onto a foreign country or remote location, the *Edmonton Journal* conveys a story that took place in the immediate, urban vicinity of the story's readers. In this way, the story connects to contemporaneous and immediate problems in the community. Newspaper reporting is inherently a forum for

the consideration of social and political issues. Whether it is a successful forum is indeterminate, but the process can be seen at work in the reports on Hammond's murder. For example, an article titled "More Patrolling, Better Lighting Asked by Women After Girl Slain" takes up the broader issue of safe communities in relation to the murder. The newspaper also reports on Hammond's funeral, thereby presenting readers with a sense of community and shared tragedy that the pulp version of the crime lacks.

Rather, the true crime tale flows along in a linear manner and the point of view is constrained to that of an anonymous, objective narrator. The events of the murder and the ensuing investigation have been put into a straight-forward order and there are no community-oriented discussions printed alongside the central story. Finally, this story provides a closure that is missing in the newspaper story: the magazine story begins with a crime and ends with the criminal's punishment, all within six pages. By encapsulating six months of reporting in a few pages, and the urgency of finding Chester Johnston, the killer, is replaced by the sense that the legal authorities possess a god-like power to bring criminals to justice. In its insistence that justice is served because the murderer "will pay with his life for the young life he so brutally cut short" (24), the true crime tale simplifies the problem of crime. While the inclusion of this story in the magazine runs counter to the more common pulp fiction gesture towards Canada as a place largely devoid of criminal activity, the simplicity of this ending echoes the prevalent denial that crime was a part of Canadian society. The newspaper coverage of the trial is ambiguous about the idea of justice. It discusses Johnston's history as a patient in a mental institution and the distress of his grandparents in a way that problematizes the portrayal of justice and social order. In contrast, the true crime representation of the murder seeks to reassure readers

that Canadian society is more than capable of repairing ruptures in the social order caused by a crime as deplorable as the random slaying of a young woman.

As much as the pulps occupied a lowly position on the cultural hierarchy, and were targeted as objects debasement by members of the ruling classes, Canadian readers expressed their support of the magazines by purchasing them in mass quantities throughout the 1940s. The existing evidence suggests that these readers were working-class men and women who needed both education and entertainment from their reading materials. In the letters they wrote, they unabashedly expressed their enjoyment of pulp fiction. Valentine responded by proclaiming his magazines as legitimate reading materials that promoted uniquely Canadian literature. In this way, he employed nationalism as a marketing strategy in both the advertising he ran and his editorial replies to reader's comments. The stories themselves presented the nation as a pristine landscape populated by essentially decent, law-abiding people. The few criminals at large were always removed from society by law enforcement officers and the courts. Such a construction of Canada re-enforced an existing social order that was not necessarily beneficial to pulp readers. Within the context of an idealized image of Canada, these social problems were framed in a way that nonetheless portrayed the nation as a community of individuals with a shared identity. In this way, the fiction itself became a site of nationalism. This idea of the nation, along with the idea of literature's place within the nation, continues to shape the reception of the pulps. Housed at a national institution, the current efforts in pulp preservation are informed by the politics of nation-building. In the next chapter, I therefore take up the pulps' transition from a mass-market

phenomenon to an archive of rare materials and consider the influence of national rhetoric on the reading of the archive itself.

Chapter Three

Considering the Collection:

How the Ephemeral Pulps Attained Archival Immortality

A small group of collectors has been responsible for the physical preservation of this ephemeral literature [dime novels] and for all of the indexes and catalogs of stories that exist. Most of the major research library collections owe their existence to these collectors, not to library initiative.

--Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents*

When we acquired the Pulp Magazine Collection, the attitude was one of guarded enthusiasm. Most people were excited about the discovery of these materials, but they didn't want to show it.

--Michel Brisebois, Rare Book Historian of the National Library of Canada

As distinct from a solidly legitimate activity, an activity on the way to legitimation continually confronts its practitioners with the question of its own legitimacy.

--Pierre Bourdieu, "The Market of Symbolic Goods."

The pulp magazines examined in this thesis nearly vanished from the Canadian literary landscape forever. Despite their immense popularity throughout the 1940s, all that remains of Alec Valentine's pulps currently exist as a solitary archive housed at the National Library of Canada. Their disappearance from the Canadian literary landscape was brought about by a mix of changes in the marketplace, decisions made by the federal government, and widespread social unease over the criminal content of the magazines. As discussed earlier, the initial impetus for pulp publishing in Canada was the War Exchange Conservation Act. The Act banned the import of luxury items from the United States as a way of bolstering the Canadian economy during the second world war. Pulp magazines were classified as a luxury item. Their sudden disappearance from news stands created a demand in the literary marketplace that the astute *Toronto Star* writer-turned-publisher Alec Valentine satisfied with home-grown Canadian magazines. Remarkably successful in the 1940s, Valentine's publications were to have little more than their ten-year reign as some of the most popular literature in the country.

At the end of the war, the federal government lifted the ban on luxury goods and the Canadian marketplace experienced an influx of American magazines. This influx slowed Canadian pulp production, reducing Valentine's publications from a mix of fiction and true crime or confessional periodicals to primarily true crime magazines. A few years later, a deluge of American-published paperback novels flooded Canada. The new format of the cheap paperback put an end to the publishing of pulp magazines in both the United States and Canada in the early 1950s. This end coincided with a 1949 amendment to Canada's Criminal Code that made it an offence to print, sell, or even own any comic book or pulp magazine that was comprised primarily of crime stories. In

response to the new illegality of the magazines, many communities organized campaigns to gather up and destroy criminal literature. The campaigns served to erase the already-existing magazines from Canadian society in the same instant that the production of new magazines ceased. These events, combined with the inherent biodegradability of the pulp paper on which the magazines were printed, resulted in the almost total obliteration of pulp magazines from Canada's literary heritage.

This study began with an original source of material, but the availability of these particular materials have been determined by their ephemeral nature: the magazines were not published with circulation past their initial sale in mind, they were not collected in the hope that they might be of value to future readers, and they were never intended to be preserved for critical study. Because of their ephemeral condition, all that remains of Alec Valentine's publications now belong exclusively to the National Library of Canada. Since 1996, the Library has been the sole possessor of roughly four-hundred-and-fifty magazines, over one-hundred original cover paintings, and five boxes of miscellaneous and often infuriatingly intriguing publisher's materials. Altogether, this archive is the foundation for future scholarship on the only known Anglo-Canadian pulps that promoted Canadian stories by Canadian writers. In this chapter, I trace the history of Valentine's pulp magazines as a publisher's archive, a private collection, and a public resource in order to understand the cultural politics that define the value and meaning accorded to these pulps as they made the transition from a precarious existence as ephemeral trash to a position of archival immortality.

Ephemera is a term that evades a static, simple definition. In enumerating a 1991 exhibit of rare ephemeral literature at the University of Iowa, Richard M. Kolbet

remarked that "defining ephemera parallels the riddle which challenged the blind men describing the elephant. Depending on its access or arrangement, presentation or purpose, the definition of printed ephemera is different for the librarian, archivist, museum curator, researcher, hobbyist, and dealer" (27). In acknowledging the complexity of ephemera and its significance to each of these groups, Kolbet refers to Chris Makepeace's 1985 book *Ephemera: A Book on its Collection, Conservation, and Use*. In this work, Makepeace struggles to untangle vague and contradictory definitions that range from "anything printed for a specific short-term purpose [...] there is hardly any limit and although books are outside our field, magazines, comics, and newspapers are very much part of it" (5)[4] to "an almost infinite variety of printed items, usually flimsy or insubstantial, designed for immediate use" (9).[5] Makepeace himself proposes a definition that identifies "material which carries a verbal or illustrative message and is produced either by printing or illustrative processes, but not in standard book, pamphlet, or periodical format" (10) as ephemera. Makepeace's definition excludes magazines, which he argues are "minor publications" rather than ephemera, although he acknowledges that this distinction is unstable. The British Library, for example, "tended to refer to all minor publications as 'ephemera'" (16) in the 1970s, while current scholarship such as Michael J. Preston's discussion of twentieth-century xeroxlore,[6] Todd Gerne's study of nineteenth-century scrapbooks,[7] and Dianne Dugaw's research on eighteenth-century broadsides and chapbooks[8] all continue to shape the meaning of ephemeral literature as they use it to delineate the scope of their work.

In spite of its constantly shifting meaning, ephemeral literature is consistently marked by three qualities. First, its print quality is flimsy and insubstantial. From a

physical standpoint, ephemera consists of materials that are not designed for material survival beyond their immediate circulation. This immediacy of use, which is often followed by immediate disposal, is ephemera's second persistent quality. Pulp magazines, for example, were intended to be read once and then discarded in favour of taking up the next issue. The mass circulation of pulps entailed the perpetual re-stocking of news stands with thousands of new issues each month. The process of constant replacement made each individual issue nothing more than a transient publication that possessed neither monetary value nor artistic merit. The third quality of ephemeral literature is the driving force behind the first two characteristics: the class politics that link ephemeral materials with readers who lack social, economic, and cultural capital. Ephemeral literature tends to be the literature of the least powerful class fractions. In Canada, for example, the pulps were read largely by working-class individuals with limited education, time, and money. Without the means to purchase and maintain goods produced with high-quality printing materials or, alternately, goods produced to be unique and therefore valuable, the lower class fractions tend to engage with ephemeral publications. In keeping with this, Michael Denning's work on nineteenth-century dime novels, Erin Smith's work on American pulp magazines, and Cathy L. Preston's collection of essays on printed ephemera all draw connections between disenfranchised groups of readers and the tendency of their literatures to be physically insubstantial and temporally transient.

In *Mechanic Accents*, Denning situates nineteenth-century dime novels as the "popular narratives of the nineteenth century [within] the cultures of American working people between the 1840s and the 1890s" (2). Denning chooses to discuss dime novel

fiction in this context in order to understand not only the fiction, but also the cultural lives of dime novels readers. The majority of these readers were from the urban working classes in the United States. Contemplating the ephemerality of this class fraction's reading materials, Denning notes that "a small group of collectors have been responsible for the physical preservation of this ephemeral literature and for all of the indexes and catalogues of stories that exist. Most of the major research library collections owe their existence to these collectors, not to library initiative" (15). Erin A. Smith echoes Denning's observation as she comments on the difficulties in reconstructing the American audience of pulp magazines. She notes:

> Lacking the personal libraries, letters, diaries, or minutes of book-club meetings through which we have access to representations of more privileged readers; what kind of space can we create for these "marginal" readers in the history of reading in America? In the absence of documents meeting traditional historical standards of proof, what would constitute evidence of working-class ways of reading? The hole in the archival record is here to stay. (10)

Relying on information about the production and distribution of pulps, analyses of advertising, and the available statistical information about reading in inter-war America, Smith is able to fill in this hole in the archive. The audience of pulp readers that she uncovers consists of male working-class readers who felt disempowered by industrialized workplace structures and the rise in consumerism. This association of ephemeral literature with the disempowered and economically disadvantaged segments of society persists in eighteenth-century broadsides and chapbooks, nineteenth-century dime novels and penny dreadfuls, or twentieth-century comic books and pulp magazines. Ephemeral

literature, characterized by its impermanence and immediacy of consumption, consistently circulates among classes of readers with the least amount of social power. In this way, social politics play out as a bid for print culture immortality: the literature of "more privileged readers" survives in archives and institutions while the literature of the underprivileged classes does not. In turn, the distinction between ephemeral and immortalized literatures impacts the legitimacy of different academic disciplines.

Cathy L. Preston takes up the contested terrain of academic legitimacy in relation to ephemeral literature. In her introduction to *The Other Print Tradition: Essays on Chapbooks, Broadsides, and Related Ephemera*, Preston opens with this argument:

> chapbooks, broadsides, photocopylore, numismatic traditions, and holy cards are examples of an extensive cheap print tradition frequently ignored by mainstream academia. "Dirtied" by their ephemeral nature, their associations with mass-production, and their everyday usedness, such materials have often been mapped by hegemonic print culture as its low "other," disparaged, and marginalized accordingly. (ix)

In effect, the disparagement accorded to the academic study of ephemera like pulps, dime novels, or broadsides mirrors the degradation surrounding the publications during their initial circulation. Preston's emphasis on mass production as a source of "otherness" that makes the study of ephemera academically illegitimate is similar to Andreas Huyssen's observation that the mass culture and the elite culture of the pulp era shared a "secret interdependence [in which] mass culture indeed seems to be the repressed other of modernism" (*Great Divide* 16). In his recent reflections on this relationship, Huyssen comments that "great divide" he named between high and low culture has frequently

been misconstrued "as a static binary of high modernism versus the market. My argument was rather that there has been, since the mid-nineteenth century in Europe, a powerful imaginary insisting on the divide while time and again violating that categorical separation in practice" ("High/Low" 366-7). In his discussion of an imaginary divide, Huyssen's comments speak to the traditional academic imagining of divisions between works of literary genius and works of printed trash. This process of imagining can be understood as a way of making the field of literary studies manageable, as it singles out works for study from an otherwise overwhelming literary marketplace. At the level of textual preservation, the insistence on such divisions works through archival practices that exclude printed ephemera.

Notably, the "otherness" of pulp literature that causes its exclusion from the archive also taints pulp fiction with a sense of dirtiness and "everyday usedness," yet pulps were dirtied by more than their ephemeral nature and everyday banality. Their sheer numbers gave them the aura of an epidemic. Millions of copies of identical pulp issues were published each month; these issues were then replaced by nearly identical issues the next month. In understanding this unceasing proliferation of copies, Boris Groys' essay "Movies in the Museum" presents a metaphor of disease that explains the way in which that mass culture is widely perceived in modern society. According to Groys:

> Every copy is like a rat. The appearance of a rat signifies that there are rats here, and that soon there will be many rats. Reproduction and distribution have a positive image in contemporary, mass society because the commercialized culture of today is always vying for even greater distribution. Despite this, a primeval

> fear of uncontrolled reproduction and distribution remains present subliminally and has an impact on our culture. Everything that spreads, whether it is McDonald's, Madonna's songs, or the movie *Titanic*, is not only an object of fascination because of its commercial success; it also reminds us immediately of cholera or the plague. (104)

This fear of contagion is a fundamental part of the pulps' debased position in the literary field. While the literature was too widespread to be effectively eliminated, respectable readers and writers resisted the inclusion of such materials in their social milieu out of a fear of contamination. Even the print quality itself played into the dirtiness of pulp reading materials, as the ink used to print the stories tended to sully the reader's fingers while the paper itself rapidly dried out and decayed so that aged pulps tend to litter the reader's floor with flakes of pulp dandruff.

Tainted objects in and of themselves, crime pulps compounded their diseased character by trading in images and stories that detailed the degradation of the human body. Taking up all forms of physical violence, crime magazines made the human body the central figure in the formulaic patterns of their fiction. As genre fiction tends to be copycat in nature, the fiction of the pulps provided variations on the same stories time and again. In this sense, the fiction itself participated in the sense of rat-like reproduction of copies that surrounded the pulps. At the same time, pulp content recounted stories in which the human body is molested, raped, strangled, shot, beat up, drowned, poisoned, burned, dismembered, buried—to name only a few of the atrocities that crime fiction offered for sale. The actual selling of these involved wrapping the content of the magazines in blatantly sexual images that carried a different connotation of dirtiness.

Typically, these images were of voluptuous women in low-cut dresses and high heels who were either being held captive at gunpoint or wielding a gun or knife themselves. The explicit cover art was then framed by blurbs like "Red Lust," "Death and a Dame," and "The Nude Corpse on the Burned Mattress." Conjoining pornography and murder, crime pulps evinced a fixation on the exploitation and destruction of the human body. This threat of physical debasement fit together with the plague-like threat of mass production and set pulp fiction apart from less insidious aspects of cultural production.

The cultural hierarchy is, in this light, a quarantine strategy in which threatening mass culture can be controlled by limiting its readership to the already downtrodden working class. Further to this, the long-term circulation of literature stemming from ephemeral sources like pulp magazines, penny dreadfuls, and broadside ballads can be impeded by establishing such literature as illegitimate or non-canonical. The non-canonical status of pulp literature ensures its exclusion from the curricula of both public and private educational institutions; this status also reduces the possibility that the printed works themselves will be deemed worthy of preservation. Over time, the predominance of mass culture becomes both physically destroyed and socially forgotten by the power of the economically and culturally elite class fractions to prevent mass art from entering either the archive or the academy.

In contrast, canonical works are labelled "classics," and classics endure: they are thought to have a lasting, and usually universal, cultural significance that secures their ongoing circulation through successive generations of readers. John Guillory observes that in defining the classics of English Literature, Cambridge scholar F.R. Leavis argued that "the great English novelists are Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James and Joseph

Conrad" (17), thereby making his project one of "defining a High Cultural novelistic canon in opposition to the depredations of what he sees as the emergence concurrently of modern mass culture and the novel (his canonical list excludes Dickens on the grounds of his mass cultural affiliations, despite his great genius)" (17). Unlike ephemera, the works that Leavis identifies—works that are in fact mainstays of high literary culture—have been never been out of print. Rather, they have been continuously circulating within both educational institutions and the general populace while many aspects of ephemeral literature have vanished.

Containment was the strategy employed to control the contagion of pulp reading materials, as the materials were too widespread to be otherwise eradicated. In the Canadian political spectrum, the denigration and eradication of pulp was aggressively pursued in place of allowing the materials to disappear from a lack of recognition. Adopting a language of infection in discussing the Fulton Bill, Member of Parliament Stuart Garson argued that Parliament had a social responsibility to "cure" Canada of pulp publishing that printed "nothing but hack-work filth seeking filthy lucre" (*Hansard* 21 Oct. 1949 1037). The best strategy for protecting the Canadian populace from harm, Garson argued, was to target pulp publishers and prosecute them to the fullest extent of the law. Where booksellers and readers could not be held accountable for selling and purchasing crime pulps and comics because they might not realize what they were buying, publishers had to be familiar with the contents of their magazines. In effect, Garson argued that the best way to contain the spread of pulp fiction was to incarcerate its producers: removing individuals like Alec Valentine from society would relieve Canada of its crime fiction plague.

Most Members of Parliament, however, realized that many thousands of magazines and comics were being imported from the United States, making Garson's focus on Canadian publishers an inadequate solution to the problem. The Federal Government therefore chose to adopt the more stringent policy initially proposed by David E. Fulton and an amendment to Section 207 of the Criminal Code was put in place on 5 December 1949. The amendment made it an offence to make, print, publish, distribute, sell, or own "any magazine, periodical or book which exclusively or substantially comprises matter depicting the commission of crimes, real or fictitious" (*Hansard* 5 Dec. 1949 2690). The offence carried a maximum sentence of up to two years in prison. This new law coincided with the rise of the cheap paperback novel, a publishing format that replaced pulp magazines in the United States by the mid-1950s. Not surprisingly, Valentine's publishing house collapsed in the 1950s in spite of the fact that he was never prosecuted for printing crime pulps. The illegality of crime fiction prompted public fear over owning and reading pulps and comic. Canadian pulp magazine collector George Flie, who was a high school student in Toronto during the 1950s, recalled various community groups harnessing this fear as they organized aggressive campaigns to destroy pulps and comics (2003). As a result, the already-existing Canadian magazines were erased from Canadian literary culture in the same instant that the production of new materials ceased.

Ironically, the years in which the mass literature of Canadian working-class readers was being destroyed saw the inception of an institution designed to preserve and promote Canada's literary heritage. On 18 June 1952, the National Library Act received royal assent and by 1953 the creation of a library designed to amass the greatest

collection of Canadiana in the world was underway. The National Library Act was a response to one of the more urgent recommendations made by the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences.[9] (With Vincent Massey at its helm, the Commission became known as simply "the Massey Commission.") The Commission had been appointed on 08 April 1949 with the two-fold purpose of assessing "the needs and desires of the citizen in relation to science, literature, art, music, the drama, films, broadcasting" and examining "certain national institutions and functions and [making] recommendations regarding their organization and the policies which should govern them" (Massey et. al. 3). National security, which could be bolstered by nationalistic feeling, was a driving forces behind Canada's need to develop a clearly defined and unified national identity in the 1950s. Between the trauma of the second world war and the new-found threat of the cold war, nationalism was viewed as the foundation in protecting and guiding the country. Drawing on the power of Canada's British colonial heritage, Massey and the other commissioners argued for the power of culture to sustain the nation in the face of duress:

> When Mr. Churchill in 1940 called the British people to their supreme effort, he invoked the traditions of his country, and based his appeal on the common background from which had grown the character and the way of life of his fellow countrymen. In the spiritual heritage of Great Britain was found the quickening force to meet the menacing facts of that perilous hour. [...] Canada became a national entity because of certain habits of mind and convictions which its people shared and would not surrender. Our country was sustained through difficult

> times by the power of this spiritual legacy. It will flourish in the future in proportion as we believe in ourselves. (4)

The Commissioners went on to argue that the creation of a national library, along with the development of galleries and museums, the expansion of the university system, and the support of a national broadcasting service, were key elements in the continuing construction Canadian heritage and national pride. The library, for its part, would serve a dual role in sustaining the "spiritual principle" to which the report refers. First, by locating all of Canada's literature in one building, the library would be a symbol of Canadian unity. Moreover, the library's promotion of its diverse collections, and Canadians' power to access these collections, would create sense of oneness among a population separated by geography and diverse cultural origins. Second, the library would perform a janus-faced function of safeguarding the nation's recorded memory while anticipating the preservation of the nation's future. The recommendations of the Commission, as much as they were couched in a rhetoric of the nation's "spiritual legacy," spoke equally to nationalism's reliance on institutions and material practices for its promulgation.

In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson explores the relationship between material practices and nationalism. He names three "institutions of power" (163) on which the foundation of collective identity is built: the census, the map, and the museum. For the newly emerging nation, Anderson argues, the museum is emblematic of the "the legitimacy of its ancestry" (164). As a legitimating factor in nation-building, museums took part in a "general process of political inheriting" (178) that provided the nation with the sense of a stable past and future identity. To put it another way, institutions that

preserve a culture's artefacts provide the nation with a sense of immortality through the process of maintaining its cultural artefacts for all posterity. In this manner, national institutions such as libraries, archives, and museums engender a sense of heritage. In doing so, these institutions define what is most valuable to that heritage. In its role as a purveyor of collective memory, the National Library preserves and provides access to the literary culture that is understood to have social and political significance for the nation.

The disappearance of pulp magazines from Canadian literary history marks the politics involved in archiving printed materials. As the pulps were not a culturally celebrated form of literature in their own era, the establishment of an identity that Canadians could celebrate necessarily meant ignoring these less commendable aspects of literary production. Such exclusion on a cultural level worked in conjunction with the wider process of glossing over social inequalities in an effort to portray the nation as harmonious and unified. To put it in more specific terms, ignoring pulp magazines meant ignoring pulp readers in order to grant Canada an image of cultural sophistication in which all Canadians had an equal share. The Library itself constituted a site of nation-building that was designed to overlook the economic and educational constraints on different social groups in favour of holding up a supposedly universal ideal of Canadian literature. This ideal, as Paul Litt argues, was essentially elitist in that the Massey Commission's recommendations for promoting and preserving Canada's heritage melded that heritage together with high culture.[10] In Litt's words:

> the report invoked the Cold War spectre of communist totalitarianism in contrast to the liberal democratic principles which the commissioners believed to be inherent in traditional high culture. Anticipating the criticism that the Cold War

> made defence spending a priority and culture a dispensable frill, the commissioners argued, "If we as a nation are concerned with the problem of defence, what, we may ask ourselves, are we defending? We are defending civilization, our share of it, our contribution to it. The things with which our inquiry deals are the elements which give civilization its character and meaning. It would be paradoxical to defend something which we are unwilling to strengthen and enrich, and which we even allow to decline." To promote high culture was to defend the liberal democratic civilization of the West. It was only through the type of education provided by high culture that the individual could become an aware and responsible democratic citizen. (212)

Further to this, Litt points out that the commissioners represented "American mass culture [as] a threat to liberal democracy that was similar in nature if not in degree to communist totalitarianism. The alternative proffered for Canada was high culture as national culture" (213). The mass readership of the pulps was contrary to such a vision. Beyond this, the magazines were also tarred by their American origins, as Alec Valentine had intentionally imitated the look and feel of American pulps in order to satisfy the demand for this type of publication created by the 1940 ban on imports. The report argued that a unified Canadian populace could best be made by improving the masses through education. From a literary standpoint, this improvement entailed replacing the trashy reading material of the working classes with culturally legitimate ones. In effect, the Massey Report argued for an elitist cultural hegemony within the nation; the Library was intended to participate in this hegemony.

As always, the immorality of pulp fiction made it a target for the promoters of legitimate, and is this case hegemonic, literature and culture. Taking up the issue of censorship in relation to the intended scope of the new library's potential to collect all forms of literature, Member of Parliament M.J. Coldwell expressed the hope that "in a national library there will be no limitation as to the kind of books that are included in the library, so that students may get a full understanding [...] and may not be blinded by some kind of censorship" (*Hansard* 20 May 1952 2380). Coldwell, however, went on to argue that "a good case can be made for preventing the circulation of salacious and pornographic literature" (*Hansard* 20 May 1952 2381). Certainly the magazines presenting criminal stories were illegal by 1952 and, as such, would not be included in the nation's collections. At the same time, political discussion about the Library's purpose centred on elevating and inspiring the minds of Canadians. As Member of Parliament George A. Drew put it:

> The thoughts of those who built this nation are thoughts that should be carried into the mind of every Canadian. The high hopes, the great aspirations, and the clear moral purpose that inspired our forefathers in the building of this country can best be passed on to the youth of Canada and to the coming generations by making available to them in this way the best that is past and the succeeding thoughts of the present. (*Hansard* 20 May 1952 2379)

The salacious and violent content of Canadian pulp stories made them the antithesis of the clear moral purpose to which Drew alludes. Further to this, the desire for great aspirations of the past to be passed along to the nation's youth, articulated in the midst of campaigns promoting the demolition of pulp magazines, demonstrates the sharply drawn

division between literary works that were deemed worthy of preservation and those that were not. Canadian pulp magazines, in spite of their importance as entertainment to the thousands of Canadian readers who had purchased them in the 1940s, and in spite of the unique efforts of Alec Valentine to publish Canadian writers, were clearly unwelcome as the nation's archival project got underway in the 1950s.

All of that changed forty-three years after the Library's creation, as the National Library acquired the last remaining magazines that were printed by Alec Valentine in 1996. The inclusion of this collection in the repository of the nation's memory is an indication of two changes in their status as cultural objects. First, these pulps have become extremely rare and, as such, have lost their threatening quality as rat-like mass-culture contagion. Second, new fields in literary studies—book history and print culture in particular—have increased the acceptability of research on works that were once considered disreputable trash. Archives of ephemera like pulp magazines are necessary for such study to take place. These changes, resulting in the National Library's acquisition of the Canadian pulp magazines, by no means elevates the magazines into either elite or canonical works. Rather, mass-culture publications provide a contrast to the canonical works that the Library has collected since its inception.

In articulating this aspect of ephemera's value, the founder of the Ephemera Society of Great Britain[11] Maurice Rickards argued that ephemeral works "express a fragment of social history, a reflection of the spirit of its time" (7). The Canadian pulps' presence in the archive fills in the gaps of social and cultural history that are created if the collections of Canada's canonical works are isolated from their lower-class counterparts. As a representation of the "spirit of its time," the pulp collection illuminates the

economics and politics surrounding the production and reception of popular fiction. Valentine's magazines draw attention to the issue of censorship, the connection between reading practices and social power, and the fear of moral corruption that surrounded Canadian crime pulps. In essence, the preservation of non-canonical works that were intended to be ephemeral at the time of their production is actually a necessary condition for constructing a synchronic understanding of literature: high literature and literary trash fit together like puzzle pieces to create a picture of the complex relationships between these disparate elements of print culture.

Alec Valentine's publications are now titled the Pulp Magazine Collection and are maintained as a part of the Library's Rare Book Collection. Some of the pieces preserved as rarities include the Canadian Broadside Collection, manuscript papers relating to the early exploration of New France, nineteenth century Canadian book plates, Native language imprints, and the Ronald I. Cohen Lucy Maud Montgomery Collection. In keeping with its mandate, the Library has made efforts to address all aspects of Canadian culture, including ephemeral literature, in this collection. Alongside the Pulp Magazine Collection resides the John Bell Comic Book Collection, the Merrilees Railway and Transportation Collection, and the Charles Mayer Sports Collection. These diverse articles are grouped together as part of the Rare Book Collection not only because of their irreplaceable nature, but also because these pieces communicate to readers unique and otherwise forgotten aspects of that nation's literature, history, and print culture. The Library's role in transmitting Canadian identity to citizens was, not surprisingly, a key factor in Parliament's support of its creation. As Member of Parliament Daniel McIvor argued in 1952, "the national library will provide an opportunity to sell Canada to

Canadian citizens. [...] Our citizens want to know about the greatness of our land" (*Hansard* 20 May 1952 2385). As the Library communicate this greatness to Canadian citizens, it inevitably communicates the manner in which the Library's collections should be interpreted by the reader.

Working to promote the Pulp Magazine Collection as an important part of Canada's literary heritage, the Library drew attention to the archive's function in representing diverse aspects of Canadian literary production. The Library staged a public exhibition titled "Sensational Stories: Pulp Literature at the National Library of Canada" from 11 July 2002 to 03 January 2003. The Library's press release on the exhibition directly addressed the problems of cultural legitimacy:

> while Canada was celebrating literary giants such as Gabrielle Roy, Irving Layton, and W.O. Mitchell, a flourishing home-grown publishing industry, catering to a different readership, was already in full swing. [...] Because their activities were considered on the margins of literary production in Canada, most "pulp fiction" publishers did not keep their printed and production materials. "This diverse range of magazines and paper-books, complemented by the behind-the-covers production materials and other archival documentation, creates an absolutely priceless opportunity to study Canada's emerging publishing industry" said Rare Book Historian Michel Brisebois, who acquired the pulp literature materials for the National Library of Canada. (Portlance paragraph 2)

The title of the exhibition drops the colloquial term "pulp fiction," which is more commonly applied to pulps, in favour of the more scholarly-sounding "pulp literature." The use of the term literature also acknowledges, however implicitly, the fact a large part

of the collection consists of true crime magazines rather than fiction periodicals. Moreover, the title separates the pulps from their mass-market ethos and connects them to idea of the literary value. Notably, the heading of the Library's press release reads "Trashy Tabloids or Literary Treasures?" The question posed in the heading expresses an ambivalence over the position of the pulps on the cultural hierarchy and an anxiety over the public perception of the pulps' literary value. This anxiety is alleviated by identifying pulp magazines as an "other" to the canon of Canadian literature that can provide with a comprehensive image of the nation. Noting that this illegitimate literary circuit was operating in conjunction with the legitimate one, Brisebois speaks of a "different" readership to which pulp magazines catered. As a part of Canadian society, this readership deserves to be remembered through the archiving and study of their reading materials. While this may be the prevailing sentiment of the current decade, the ambivalence over the value of pulp magazines was the source of their fifty-year absence from the archive.

Their preservation, as with much ephemera, is due to the efforts of George Flie, a private collector who specializes in acquiring and trading ephemeral material like magazines, comic books, and playbills. Flie first encountered the Canadian pulps in 1973 when he met Alec Valentine through their mutual friend George Henderson. Henderson was Toronto book dealer whose shop, *Memory Lane*, traded in comic books, pulp magazines, and movie memorabilia. Valentine had recently sold Henderson some of the original cover paintings that he had saved from his days as a publisher in the 1940s. Intrigued, Flie asked Henderson about the pieces and discovered that they were an aspect of a little-known publishing phenomenon. Eventually, Henderson introduced Flie to

Valentine. Valentine was happy to discuss his experiences in pulp publishing, but he was not interested in selling his magazine collection at that time.

For his part, Valentine had compiled an archive of his pulp magazines during the 1940s. Unfortunately, his collecting methodology created some gaps in the collection's completeness. Valentine used to send every single copy of each title he published to the news-stands. If some of the magazines did not sell, the news dealers would send them back to him. He maintained one copy of each title that was returned and discarded the rest. Not surprisingly, some titles sold out completely each month, while other titles would occasionally sell out. Valentine's one romance fiction magazine, *Romantic Love Stories*, is entirely absent from the collection, suggesting that it was among the titles that sold out every month. In keeping with this, only three issues of his only true romance title, *Sensational Love Experiences*, have been preserved. These three issues show that *Sensational Love Experiences* was a monthly publication with a print run that lasted for at least eight years, meaning that most issues of this particular title are absent from to archive. Other genres of which Valentine only produced one title, such as the action-adventure title *Sky Blazers* and the western title *Dynamic Western* are all missing several issues. In our discussion of pulp collecting, Flie noted that Valentine quickly discovered that Canadians seemed to prefer true crime magazines more than any other genre. Catering to this demand, he produced more true crime titles than all of the other genre titles combined. He also printed more copies of each title so that his readers would have a constant supply of these publications. The Pulp Magazine Collection reflects this publishing strategy, as it consists primarily of true crime titles and each title has one representative copy of each issue that was published. While the collection may be

missing some pieces, Flie observed that it is relatively comprehensive—when Flie purchased the archive, Valentine estimated that it contained roughly seventy-five percent of everything that he had printed from 1940-50.

Two years after their initial meeting in 1973, Flie and Valentine were brought together over the illness their friend. In 1975, George Henderson suffered a stroke. For the next two years, his colleagues worked to keep the business going while he recovered, but the store was eventually shut down. Its existing stock was, as much as possible, to be returned to its original owners. Flie sought to return Valentine's paintings to him. Rather than taking them back, however, Valentine chose to sell them to Flie. He was not, however, inclined to part with the rest of his collection until 1987. At this time, Valentine contacted Flie to see if he was still interested in the magazines. Flie said he was indeed still interested and came over to look at them. He was surprised to find that Valentine had been storing them in a backyard shed that faced onto an alley; he was even more surprised to discover that all of the magazines were in pristine condition. The covers were as bright and crisp as they had been forty years before, none of the pages had significantly yellowed or cracked, and the magazines had suffered no damage from water or insects. Valentine also had a few boxes of materials from his publishing days and roughly fifty of the original cover paintings. Flie purchased all of it. In doing so, he performed a rare feat in ephemeral collecting: he re-united the new materials with the paintings that had previously been separated out of the archive and sold to him in 1975. Flie kept this collection intact for the next nine years while he searched for any other Canadian pulp materials that might still be circulating in the ephemeral literature trade or preserved in other private collections. He did not uncover any more items, which

convinced him of the rarity of his collection. In 1996, he decided it was time to part with the materials and contacted Michel Brisebois at the National Library of Canada.

Brisebois and Flie had known one another since the late 1960s. According to Brisebois, when Flie phoned him "he said—and this is a great line—"I've really got something here … but I doubt you'd be interested." Of course I was intrigued" (2003). Brisebois got some of details on the collection and immediately suspected its rarity; he was particularly interested by the many pieces of original cover art that Flie described. He went to Toronto the next week to view the collection. He realized, upon looking through the magazines, that he had never seen the titles before and guessed that these magazines did not exist anywhere else in the world. The cover paintings could be matched to the covers, making it possible to trace the transition between the painting and the final image as it was framed with promotional blurbs, title, and price. "Immediately," said Brisebois, "I was thinking exhibition. I knew that these were materials that the Library should have. But of course, I didn't want to show too much interest. The price George was asking was steep. We had some negotiating to do" (2003). Eventually, collector and librarian arrived at a price that the Library's Acquisition Board might find acceptable. Brisebois returned to Ottawa to draft a proposal for the purchase.

Brisebois anticipated one potential glitch in acquiring the collection: the Library does not normally purchase artwork because it is not well equipped to preserve and display paintings. This was particularly problematic in that the price of the collection was greatly increased due to the presence of the paintings. In order to emphasize the importance of purchasing the collection as a whole, and place due emphasis on the importance of the magazines themselves, he got two letters of reference to submit with

the proposal. One was from a graduate student in sociology, Mary Louise Adams, who was at Carleton University at the time. She argued for the collection's potential to serve as a resource for research on Canada's history and social politics. The other letter was written by John Bell, the Senior Archivist at the University of Toronto Library. Bell is also a comic book aficionado who in fact donated the John Bell Canadian Comic Book Collection to the Rare Book Division of the National Library in 1996. He argued authoritatively for the collection's rarity, pristine condition, and foundation as a site of research in several academic fields. In emphasizing the scholarly value of the pulps alongside their rarity and place in Canadian history, Adams and Bell definitively accorded the pulps academic, social, and cultural legitimacy.

Supporting their claim to this legitimacy, the acquisitions board approved the purchase of the collection soon after the proposal was submitted. Brisebois notes that the Board "is different from the usual acquisitions board in [...] museums. This board only has members who work for the Library. M. Carrier is on it as well as four or five of the directors-general. The purpose is to give approval for the more expensive purchases [and to make] sure that these are within the mandate of the library" (2003). In regard to the pulp acquisition, Brisebois described the attitude as one of "guarded enthusiasm. Most people were excited about the discovery of these materials, but they did not want to show it." Such a reaction is common with institutional libraries. It is an attitude that contrasts sharply with the approach of private collectors in building their libraries.

Private book collectors are autonomous individuals who are often responsible for the rescue of cultural objects, works of art, and knowledge that would otherwise be lost. Contemplating this responsibility, Nicholas Basbanes researched the efforts and

importance of these collectors throughout history. In *A Gentle Madness: Bibliophiles, Bibliomanes, and the Eternal Passion for Books*, he argues that "so much of what we know about history, literature, and culture would be lost forever if not for the passion and dedication of these driven souls" (3). Basbanes' work discusses the most famous libraries in the world, showing that these libraries are almost invariably amassed by private collectors. The most well-known of these individuals tend to be those with vast financial resources at their disposal and their collections are often an index to the collector's level of personal wealth as well as a measure of their class-determined sense of aesthetics. Collections function as a form of financial investment; the amassing of books that are likely to increase in value parallels the practices of capitalism on which the fortunes of collectors like Henry E. Huntington, Henry Clay Folger, and J. Pierpont Morgan were built. The endeavours of these collectors suggest a quest for immortality, as all of their libraries became posthumous monuments to their lives. Additionally, philanthropy is connected to their libraries, as the private collections of Huntington, Folger, Morgan, and many others are eventually made available for research and scholarship either as independent libraries or as donations to university and public libraries. Public institutions, then, rely on private collectors for the most rare and unusual books and magazines in their possession. Limited funding explains the dependence of public institutions have on private collectors. Public libraries also have governing bodies to which their curators must answer in regard to their collecting endeavours. Both of these factors contribute to making institutional libraries conservative in nature and, as a result, these libraries are likely to restrict their acquisitions to books with well-established economic, academic, and cultural value. Ephemeral literature does not, of course,

possess this value at its time of circulation and libraries therefore rely on private collectors for these materials.

The transition that the private collection makes to the public library re-frames the reading of the collection. In her discussion of working-class readers, Erin Smith points out the ways in which institutions inform reading practices. As she explains:

> social and institutional structures [are] related to literacy, education, and cultural production. [...] Describing how these structures enable and constrain reading practices, Elizabeth Long distinguishes between "social infrastructure" and "social framing." Social infrastructure is composed of the institutions in which reading is taught and carried out—families, schools, libraries, bookstores, book clubs, and so on. Social framing refers to collective and institutional processes [that]shape reading practices by authoritatively defining what is worth reading and how to read it. (7)

While politicians attempted to contain the dissemination of pulp magazines through the Criminal Code, the magazines are now contained within an institution. This containment, combined with the disappearance of the magazines from popular circulation, has eroded the dangerous quality of the pulps that once made legislators and social groups fear them. Having lost their mass readership, and having been succeeded by mass media like television and cinema, the pulps have lost their position as a perceived threat to the fabric of society. Instead, the magazines are now thought of as artifacts of interest to specialists working in fields as various as print culture, criminology, and post-colonialism.[12]

This new-found legitimacy is partially derived from the archive's authority to determine which texts merit preservation and study. Further to this, the archiving of

pulps determines who has the power to read the magazines: the archive connects its materials to readers in positions of authority and these readers are, in turn, accorded the right and privilege to interpret these materials. Reviewing the origins of the word archive, Jacques Derrida traces this connection between authority and archive:

> the meaning of "archive," its only meaning, comes from the Greek *arkheion*: initially a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the *archons*, those who commanded. The citizens who thus held and signified political power were considered to possess the right to make or represent the law. On account of their publicly recognized authority, it is at their home, in that *place* which is their house (private house, family house, or employee's house), that official documents are filed. The archons are first of all the documents' guardians. They do not only ensure the physical security of what is deposited and of the substrate. They are also accorded the hermeneutic right and competence. They have the power to interpret the archive. (2)

While the archive's position at the National Library is not related to the making of laws, nor is access to the Pulp Magazine Collection completely restricted to the guardians of the documents, similar politics of authority continue to surround the archive. As a rare collection, access to the pulps is limited to those pursuing critical work on pulps rather than those who wish to read them purely for entertainment. While this measure is in place largely to protect the magazines from rapid disintegration, the effect of it is essentially one of discrimination: professional readers have the privilege of working with the archive where common readers are barred from it. If one is among the privileged few, the place in which one reads the pulp archive is institutionally determined.

To begin with, the magazines cannot taken from rare book room and the room itself under the constant surveillance of a video camera. The magazines are genially brought out upon request, but the reader is still required to wear both the official identification issued by the Library in addition to white cotton gloves that prevent the reader from physically touching—and therefore damaging—the materials. Finally, the reader must sign in with the less-than-friendly security guards each morning and leave all of his or her belongings in a storage locker except for any materials needed for research. Running parallel to the practices that define the professional reader's experience are the rules that structure the common reader's access to the magazines. The only way of approaching the collection that is offered to the common reader is the public exhibition, which displays selected items from the archive. The exhibition attendee is free to read about the magazines via the informational blurbs provided by the librarians, but the magazines themselves are safely stored behind glass. Ironically, the masses no longer need to be protected from the pulps. Rather, the pulps need to be protected from the masses.

The professional readers of the pulp magazines at the Library consist largely of academics and specialists. Professional readers (like myself) now approach the archive with critical questions in mind; these questions connect to particular academic methodologies that define the ways in which the magazines are read. Such an approach is in direct opposition to the escapist, frivolous, or dangerous reading status that the pulps possessed in their prime. The distinction between these two ways of reading is, in fact, very much a part of the legitimating process that alters pulp magazines from pop-culture trash to a viable subject of study. This alteration is by no means definitive or complete.

This ambivalence, according to Pierre Bourdieu, should come as no surprise. As he points out, a newly legitimate field of study is "distinct from a solidly legitimate activity, an activity on the way to legitimation continually confronts its practitioners with the question of its own legitimacy" (131). In their shift from an ephemeral phenomenon to a position of permanence in Canadian history and culture, the Pulp Magazine Collection implicates its readers in a struggle to further establish and maintain the legitimacy it was granted upon its installation in the Rare Book Collection.

In this way, the archive's continued survival and significance depends on the interest that researchers have in it. The institutional framework that currently shapes pulp magazine reading is a part of the archive's aura. To return to Boris Groys, the aura of an original work of art resides in its topology. As he explains, "the topology of the context alone decides its status. [...] When one goes to a work of art, it is an original. When one forces the work of art to come to oneself, it is a copy" (93). The pulp archive displays the same characteristics as the work of art: its status is closely tied to its physical location, its value is determined by its uniqueness, and its power is expressed by its ability to make the reader come to it. Paradoxically, the archive only has presence and status if a reader chooses to come to it. Without readers, the archive exists in the limbo of a darkened, underground vault beneath the National Library. With readers, particularly readers (like academics) who write about their reading material, the archive receives a new animating force. Critical writings on Canadian pulp magazines create a system of secondary texts that circulate among new readers. As a result, the archive expands beyond the parameters of institutional containment and control.

In this way, the archive exists in a state of fixed fluidity. It is fixed because it cannot move from its as a place in the National Library's Rare Book Collection, barring a catastrophe, such as a fire or a war, or a financial transaction, like the sale of the archive to another institution or a private collector. The archive is fluid because the nature of its readers fluctuates according to its location and cultural status. No one, for example, read Valentine's pulps while they were stored in his back-yard shed, but now the magazines attract readers to their location in Ottawa. The archive is also fluid because of the way it is discussed in the secondary texts. These texts constantly re-define the meaning the meaning of the archive in the same instant that they provide it with a vicarious circulation among readers outside of the Library. This thesis, for example, constructs a meaning of the archive that is fraught with political, economic, social, and cultural implications; I consider Canadian pulp magazines as a cross-roads of Canadian publishing history, reading practices, and archival politics. Other constructions could, for example, take up its meaning to fans of pulp fiction. Alternately, individual stories in the magazines have yet to be examined, while the magazines that feature genres other than the crime story have not been explored at all. The production of texts about the archive connect it to the social world from which it is now physically isolated.

The Library's role as an official upholder of national identity implies that to learn from the collection is to learn about Canadian history and identity. Moreover, the pulp archive's presence in the National Library suggests that it is a significant aspect of Canada's literary heritage. No longer deemed ephemeral pieces of trash, Canadian pulp magazines now garner treatment as an important aspect of Canadian culture. That said, the location of the Library, which is within view of the Parliament Buildings and the

Supreme Court, also situates the reading of the archive. Its position serves as a reminder of the legislation that criminalized the pulps fifty years ago. Visiting the archive is therefore enmeshed with the question of the magazines' academic, social and cultural legitimacy and the reader always aware that the pulps' presence in the National Library is a reflection of their altered position in the cultural hierarchy. In turn, the force of that hierarchy in determining the preservation of, and access to, different texts inverts yet echoes the forces that shaped pulp production and reception in their own era.

Conclusion

This diverse range of magazines and paper-books, complemented by the behind-the-covers production materials and other archival documentation, creates an absolutely priceless opportunity to study Canada's emerging publishing industry.

--Michel Brisebois

This project, in its re-construction of Canadian pulp magazine history, explores the interaction between popular texts and the social world. Operating in a conflicting mode of mass popularity and cultural marginality, pulp magazines reflect the economic and political tensions of the 1940s. As a result of their formal, physical, moral, and aesthetic degradation, pulps were a form of literary production that occupied a lowly position in Canada's cultural hierarchy. They were accordingly targeted as either objects to be mocked or objects to be censored and obliterated. On the other hand, the magazines thrived for a decade as Canadian readers purchased them in mass quantities and, in light of the existing evidence, applauded the magazines for promoting Canadian talent. Building on their appeal as uniquely Canadian magazines, Valentine employed national pride as a marketing strategy. The stories themselves mirror a sense of patriotism despite the fact that they often argue in favour of an existing social order that was not necessarily beneficial to pulp readers. Rather, social problems were set out in the fiction alongside images of community and an idealized Canadian identity that conveyed a sense of nationalism. The idea of the nation remains at the centre of reading Valentine's magazines. When the only remaining pulp magazines in Canada were acquired by the National Library of Canada, the pulps became engaged in a present-day argument for their importance to both literature and Canadian identity. To be immersed in the archive is, therefore, to be simultaneously immersed in the pulps' continuing negotiation of national, social, and cultural legitimacy.

This study, as a preliminary foray into an understanding of pulp literature in Canada, opens up the possibility for much future research. The research presented here could be expanded upon by pursuing more information on authors and readers. Given the

possibility that many of the original Canadian pulp writers and readers are alive today, the opportunity to gain first-hand accounts of pulp production and reception could provide greater insight into this subject. Similarly, more research could be completed on the art work in the pulps. As the National Library now possesses over one-hundred original paintings of cover art, a consideration of cover art, complete with a compendium of the images themselves, could be be created.

In a different vein, the Canadian pulps could be further considered alongside their contemporaneous slicks. A more detailed understanding of the pulps' position on the cultural hierarchy could be constructed in this manner, as could a greater understanding of nationhood in as it was posited in the respective realms of popular and "high" literature. In regard to the materials in the archive itself, far more work needs to be completed on the stories and true crime tales. Out of four-hundred-and-fifty magazines, only a minute selection of these stories have been discussed. The crime stories in particular present fertile ground for understanding the popular treatment of racial politics, gender expectations, and morality. That said, discussions of non-crime genre stories need to be pursued. To date, no work on the western stories, confessional magazines, or science-fiction tales has been done. Such work has the potential to reveal otherwise unknown aspects of Canadian literary life in the 1940s. As a critical discussion of the pulps at the present time inevitably engages the issue of academic and cultural legitimacy, such a discussion also lends itself to a complex understanding of the present moment's cultural politics. The Pulp Magazine Collection, and the insights it presents to its readers, has the potential to shape future critical inquiries into Canadian literature, national identity, and the cultural hierarchy.

Endnotes

[1] During my interview with George Flie, he related several anecdotes about parties, practical jokes, and unusual incidents that took place at the publishing house. In one rather exciting story, Flie explained that Valentine began work in publishing with the *Toronto Star* in 1920. At the time, the writers were threatening to go on strike. One of the writers approached Valentine with a cheque. "If these men go on strike," he said, "I want you to make sure they've got money for coffee and cigarettes." "Sure," said Valentine and filed the cheque away. The writer subsequently departed for Europe, the threat of the strike dissipated, and Valentine forgot about the cheque. In 1943, however, Valentine came across the cheque as he was clearing out some very old and dusty files. Relating the story to Flie in the 1980s, Valentine said "You'll never believe who it was from. It was signed by that war correspondent. The one who became famous. What's his name?" "Not Hemingway!" said Flie. "Yeah, that's the one! That's something, isn't it?" Unfortunately, the cheque is not among the items preserved in the archive.

[2] According to George Flie, the May 1948 cover of *Startling Crime Cases* features Valentine's wife. The man on the May 1941 cover of *Daring Detective* is Valentine's most prolific writer, Thomas P. Kelley.

[3] Dashiell Hammett's *Red Harvest*, often considered the prototype for the hard-boiled detective novel, features a city run by professional criminals, a corrupt police force, and a capitalist at least as evil as the gangsters and cops. While the detective manages to eradicate gangsters and corrupt police officers by the end of the story, the capitalist

remains in a position of power over the city, causing the detective to cynically comment that the town will only be ruined again.

[4] Makepeace is quoting J.N.C. Lewis' definition of ephemera. The definition appears in Lewis' book *Collecting Printed Ephemera*. London: Studio Vista, 1979. 9.

[5] Makepeace is quoting R.P. Sturgess and D. Dixon. The definition appears in *An Investigation of Local Publications, BLRDD Report 5645*. Loughborough: Loughbourough University Department of Library and Information Studies, 1983. 5.

[6] In his essay "In Addition to Xeroxlore: Related Subversive Traditions," Michael J. Preston explores the transmission of culture through "xeroxlore, those traditional photocopied items which circulate in workplaces—and elsewhere—often in spite of managerial opposition because their production wastes employee's on-the-job time and the company's materials resources while at the same time serving as severe critiques of many company practices" (223). Preston also takes up other forms of popular ephemera, including "elongated cents, wooden nickels, one-ounce silver art bars and rounds, and rubber stamps" (223) in order to understand "the transgression of hegemonic values in the areas of subject, representation, and production" of these items (224). As such, Preston situates ephemeral literature as the property of an oppressed underclass of office workers; their uses of ephemeral literature is an act of resistance to the dominant corporate culture in which these individuals function. See *The Other Print Tradition: Essays on Chapbooks, Broadsides, and Related Ephemera*. Ed. Cathy Lynn Preston and Michael J. Preston. New York: Garland Publishing, 1995. 223-265.

[7] Todd Gernes' essay "Recasting the Culture of Ephemera" explores "how ordinary people created meaning, art, and history by assembling and patterning the short-lived,

transitory objects and materials of everyday life in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America" (107). While Gernes is less acerbic than Preston, Gernes is also considering an underclass of cultural producers and readers—domesticated women who produced commonplace books, friendship books, and scrapbooks. Citing Barton Levi St. Armand argument that these women participated in "a means of preserving the secret self in the face of … growing technological exposure" (109) Gernes traces the private and highly personal efforts of these individuals to express values and personal independence of thought that often contradicted the repressive nature of their life experiences. See *Popular Literacy: Studies in Cultural Practices and Poetics*. Ed. John Trimbur. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 2001. 107-127.

[8] Dianne Dugaw argues that "an ideology of "otherness" has undergirded the concept of the folk" in her essay "Chapbook Publishing and the 'Lore' of 'the Folks.'" Apart from mainstream culture, folklore's marginalized position is further compounded by "a persistent bias in folklore scholarship which dismisses printed sources, notably broadsides and chapbook texts" (3). This bias denies such folklore scholarship full academic legitimacy, as academic studies privilege textual scholarship over the study of oral traditions. Moreover, the dismissal of popular print traditions undercuts a complex understanding folklore in eighteenth-century Britain and America. See *The Other Print Tradition: Essays on Chapbooks, Broadsides, and Related Ephemera*. Ed. Cathy Lynn Preston and Michael J. Preston. New York: Garland Publishing, 1995. 3-18.

[9] Between 1949 and 1951, Vincent Massey (Chancellor of the University of Toronto and Ontario manufacturing magnate), Arthur Surveyor (Civil Engineer), Norman MacKenzie (President of the University of British Columbia), George-Henri Levesque (Dean of

Social Sciences, Laval University), and Hilda Neatby (Head of History Department, University of Saskatchewan), travelled across Canada, hosting forums and collecting statistical evidence, in an effort to construct a comprehensive image of Canadian culture.

[10] The educational backgrounds of each of the commissioners may well have contributed to the elitist nature of its recommendations. Each of them had professional designations and four of the five commissioners occupied university posts of high standing. That this elitism would not have been lost on the Canadian populace is suggested by the popular expression that claimed "in Canada there are no social classes, just the Masseys and the masses" (Kingwell and Moore 279). Massey's role as the head of the Commission signalled the Commission's separation from Canadian mass culture.

[11] The Ephemera Society was founded in 1975. According to Makepeace, their objectives were "to provide a permanent institutional framework as the internationally recognized body for the study, conservation, and display of ephemera" (7).

[12] The recent work of criminologist Carolyn Strange and historian Tina Loo examines representations of crime and law enforcement in several of Valentine's true crime tales. Taking up the treatment of race, Loo and Strange concern themselves primarily with the fiction's valourization of colonial power, which is symbolized by RCMP officers, as the foundation of Canadian society. See "From Hewers of Wood to Producers of Pulp: True Crime in Canadian Pulp Magazines of the 1940s." *The Journal of Canadian Studies* 37.2 (2002): 11-33.

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